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THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY,

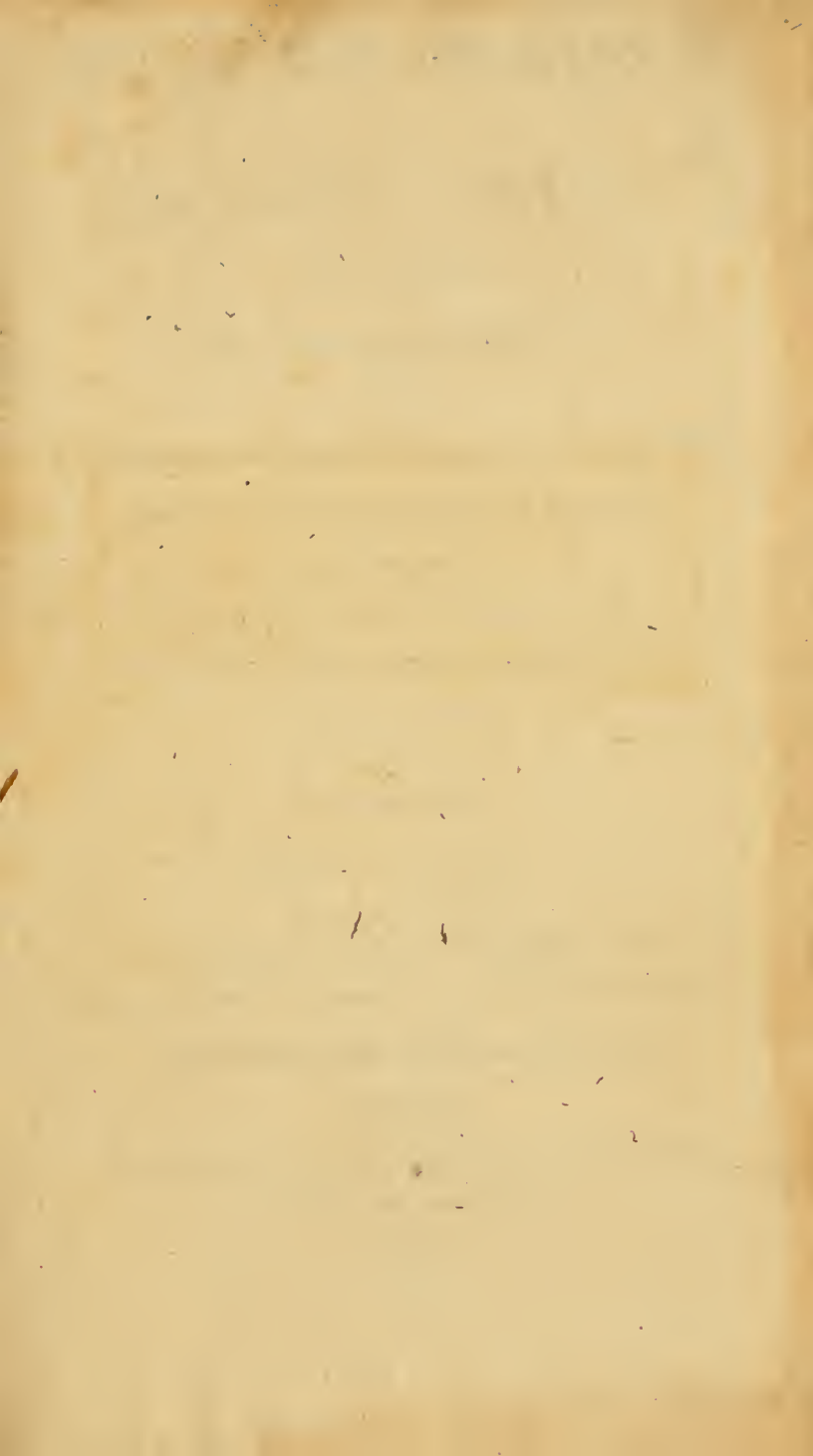
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# FIFTY-TWO SERMONS

ON

THE BAPTISMAL COVENANT,

THE CREED,

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS,

AND OTHER

IMPORTANT SUBJECTS OF PRACTICAL RELIGION;

*BEING ONE FOR EACH SUNDAY IN THE YEAR.*

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BY SAMUEL WALKER, A. B.

LATE OF EXETER-COLLEGE, OXFORD; CURATE OF TRURO, IN CORNWALL, &c. &c.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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NEW EDITION;

CORRECTED AND REVISED

BY THE REV. SAMUEL BURDER, M. A.

OF CLARE-HALL, CAMBRIDGE; AND CHAPLAIN TO HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE DUKE OF KENT.

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LONDON:

PRINTED FOR MATHEWS AND LEIGH, IN THE STRAND,

*By W. Clowes, Northumberland-court.*

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1810.

ROYAL SOCIETY OF LONDON

The Royal Society of London, for the Improvement of Natural Knowledge, was instituted in the year 1660, by a charter from Charles II. The members of the Society are called Fellows, and are divided into two classes, the Honorary and the Foreign. The Honorary Fellows are those who have been elected to the Society, and the Foreign Fellows are those who have been elected by the Society to represent it in foreign countries. The Society has a long and illustrious history, and has been the seat of many of the most important discoveries in the history of science. The Society has a large collection of books and manuscripts, and has a number of laboratories and observatories. The Society has also been instrumental in the establishment of many of the most important scientific institutions in the world.

# ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE

*PRESENT EDITION.*

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As Religion is designed to promote the temporal and everlasting happiness of mankind; it must be rightly understood and practically regarded. The beams of divine light which it diffuses must penetrate the mind, and direct all our steps. But a speculative belief of the truth will not produce purity of heart: it must be received in faith and love, and be accompanied by an inward experience of its power; this will secure a suitable external deportment. A regeneration of principle, effected by the vital energy of divine grace, will constrain us to walk as children of the light, and to perform all the duties enjoined upon us by the regal authority of Christ. Hence we may perceive the union and connexion of doctrinal and practical religion; and the utility

## ADVERTISEMENT.

of those theological works in which they are consistently blended, and exhibited to our view. Such, in no common degree, is the character of the Sermons of the late eminently pious Samuel Walker: they have long been held in high estimation, and are now presented to the public with the well-grounded expectation that they will be instrumental of much good. May the kingdom of that Redeemer, who, though he was once abased, reigns triumphant in heaven, be continually advanced and established, till all the nations of the world are made submissive to his authority, and yield him unfeigned honour and perpetual glory!

SAMUEL BURDER.

LONDON, MAY 14, 1810.



# ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE

*FORMER EDITION.*

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**T**HE worthy character of the late Reverend Mr. Samuel Walker, of Truro, is well known. The practical discourses with which he favoured the public in his life-time have been much read and admired, and most of them frequently reprinted. Before his death he intended to publish his Discourses on the Church of England Catechism: those of them on the Creed chiefly excel in illustrating the tendency of the doctrines of our holy faith to promote holiness and virtue; and, in those on the Commands, the great duties of the Christian life are explained with such force of argument, that their merit has been candidly acknowledged by the English reviewers, and other gentlemen of taste, who espouse religious sentiments very opposite to Mr. Walker's. The sale of the

## ADVERTISEMENT.

former Edition was so rapid, that, for many years past, it has been with the utmost difficulty that a copy could be procured at any price. The republishing them is now undertaken at the earnest desire of several persons of distinction ; and, it is hoped, will find a favourable reception among the pious and judicious of different denominations.

JANUARY 4, 1778.

# THE PREFACE,

CONTAINING AN

*ACCOUNT OF THE AUTHOR'S LIFE AND MINISTRY.*

WRITTEN IN THE YEAR 1763.

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IN reading the works of a man who hath been eminent in his profession, if it be done out of a desire of improvement, we are solicitous to inquire how he spent his private hours, and by what means he attained to his superior degree of excellence. An insight into the life and character of an author not only kindles in the ingenuous mind a laudable desire of imitation, but also prepares it for the better reception of what he has to advance; and therefore may be considered in some sort as a recommendation of the work itself. This observation will perhaps hold good with regard to the compositions of the learned in other professions; but must certainly be allowed to have the greatest weight when applied to the writings of those who have shewn the spirituality of God's law, and have applied it closely to the conscience in order to produce that conviction of sin which alone can lead us to Christ. The strictness of this divine law the heart of man naturally rises against, and desires to shake it off as a yoke too heavy to be borne.

There never indeed appeared but one Person upon earth who might justly give the challenge, Which of you convinceth me of sin? and who could appeal to the great Searcher of hearts, As I came into the world to do thy will, so have I kept thy sayings. All others, Christ only excepted, have need to smite their breasts, and to cry out, with the publican, God, be merciful to me; a sinner!

But though, through the degeneracy and impotence of our fallen nature, we are rendered incapable of performing a perfect and un-sinful obedience to the divine will ; yet, when we are convinced that men of like passions with ourselves have been made more than conquerors over their inbred corruptions, have brought forth their fruit unto holiness in a life uniformly dedicated to the glory of God and the good of their brethren, and have at last finished the course of this their mortal life with a hope full of immortality, we can no longer have any doubt concerning the reality and efficacy of a saving change wrought in their temper and conduct, how difficult soever it may appear to flesh and blood. And it remains only that we walk in the same steps which they trod, that we may be made partakers of the same precious promises.

The force of example is known to be much more powerful than that of precept. Those who are Christians, not in name and outward profession only, but in spirit and in truth, are set forth as so many lights in a dark and benighted world. They are commanded to let their light so shine before men that they may see their good works, and glorify their Father which is in heaven. They are the salt of the earth ; and they are directed so to season their speech, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. Such is the life of a real Christian upon earth : and his writings after his decease may be regarded as the sayings of him, who, being dead, yet speaketh.

I would not wish to prepossess the mind of the reader with any undue bias in favour of the Author of the following Discourses. Let the matter contained in them be carefully examined by the test of the written word. Let the facts now to be recorded in a short sketch of his life show that what he taught in public he lived in private ; and let them testify that his ministerial labours were not confined to the pulpit, but that he diligently used every other method which seemed likely to promote the salvation of his flock. All that I would request of the reader is, that, in comparing the Author's sentiments with the sacred oracles, he would beg of the Father of spirits to give him a single eye and an humble heart, and to enable him clearly to discern and affectionately to embrace the truth as it is in Jesus.

Humility and sincerity of mind is the only soil wherein the

seed of the word will grow up unto eternal life ; and the Bible is the only book from which we can learn to separate the wheat from the chaff.

Those of the Clergy into whose hands these sheets may fall will excuse my importunity if I bespeak their more careful attention in reviewing the Life and Writings of Mr. Walker. Though neither eminence of station in the world, nor rare and uncommon attainments in human literature, will excite their admiration (for he lived and died a Curate) ; and though he was no way deficient in any branch of learning pertaining to his profession ; yet he was engaged in too active and busy a scene of life to have leisure to acquire that extent and depth of erudition, which many men of less employment, without superior abilities, have attained to. But they will find in him excellencies of another kind, not less worthy of their regard ; they will here contemplate the life and doctrines of one possessed in an eminent degree of the knowledge, spirit, and zeal of a primitive Christian teacher ; of one who, though poor in this world, was rich in faith and good works ; of one who had learned to esteem the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt.

I humbly call upon you, Reverend Brethren, who have taken upon you the solemn and important office of the ministry, to observe with what diligence and earnest concern for the salvation of the souls of men he laboured faithfully to fulfil the duties of his function. I beseech you to consider with calm and unprejudiced minds, as a matter of the utmost importance to yourselves, whether his sentiments were not exactly agreeable to the revealed word of God, and his conduct in all things conformed to the examples of faith and patience therein recorded for our instruction and imitation. If, upon a cool and dispassionate examination, you see reason to conclude that they were, let me earnestly entreat you to be followers of him as he also was of Christ. If such a conduct should expose you, as it did him, to reproaches and sufferings, contempt and ridicule, not only from the more openly careless and profligate, but even from some, who, though they maintain a decent form of godliness, are nevertheless unhappy strangers to the life and power thereof, you will with him remember, that he who spake as never man spake was despised

and rejected of men ; and take consolation from these encouraging words of your blessed Master, who declared to his disciples, that they would have great cause to rejoice and be exceeding glad when men should revile them and persecute them, and say all manner of evil of them falsely, for his and his Gospel's sake. If, with him, you endure hardness like good soldiers of Jesus Christ, not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing, but contrariwise blessing ; if you are nothing moved by whatever trials may assault you, from the steady and uninterrupted pursuit of your own salvation, and that of those who hear you, you will also doubtless with him be made abundant partakers of the rich consolations that are in Christ, to sweeten your passage through this vale of sin and sorrow : you will triumph as he did in the immediate prospect of approaching dissolution, and at last enter into the possession of that glorious inheritance, wherein he is now praising the Lord for his grace and mercy, and exulting in the fruition of eternal bliss.

I will now enter upon the task assigned to me, of drawing up, from authentic memorials, a succinct account of the Life and Ministry of the Author of the following Discourses.

Our Author, Samuel Walker, was the youngest of seven children ; he was born at Exeter, on the 16th day of December, in the year of our Lord 1714. His parents were Robert Walker, of the city of Exeter, Esq. and Margaret his wife, who was the only daughter of the Rev. Mr. Richard Hall, Minister of St. Edmunds and All-hallows in that city.

Robert Walker, the father of Mr. Samuel Walker, was the only son of Sir Thomas Walker, Knt. who, as his ancestors had done, represented the city of Exeter in many successive Parliaments during the reigns of King Charles I. and King Charles II. Sir Thomas's lady was Mary the only daughter of the Rev. Samuel Hall, A. M. youngest son of Dr. Joseph Hall, Bishop of Exeter.

Thus was our Author lineally descended from that pious, learned, evangelical, and truly Christian Prelate, to whom he seemed to have been allied not only by proximity of blood, but likewise by affinity and similarity of sentiment ; as well as by a yet nobler relationship in grace, by being united, as a living mem-

ber of the same mystical body, to the same glorious and exalted Head, Christ Jesus.

Mr. Samuel Walker having lived under the care of his parents till he was eight years of age, was then put to the grammar-school in Exeter, where he continued till he was eighteen; when he was sent to Exeter College in the University of Oxford, and put under the care of the present Rector of that society, Dr. Francis Webber.

Having taken the degree of Bachelor of Arts in the year 1737, he was ordained the latter end of that year, and appointed to the Curacy of Dodescomb-Leigh, in the neighbourhood of Exeter, where he continued till August, 1738. He was prevailed upon by the late Lord Rolle to undertake the charge of his youngest brother's education, and to make the tour of France with him, where Mr. Walker acquired many of those polite accomplishments which adorn the gentleman.

About two years after he returned to England, and accepted of the Curacy of Lanlivery, in the county of Cornwall, under the Rev. Nicholas Kendall, A. M. one of the Canons of Exeter, and Archdeacon of Totness. On the death of Mr. Kendall, March 3, 1740, he was presented by Walter Kendall, Esq. to the said Vicarage, to hold the same during the minority of a nephew of Mr. Kendall, to whom, upon his coming of age, Mr. Walker resigned it, and at Midsummer, 1746, entered upon the Curacy of Truro, in Cornwall.

Mr. Walker, during the six years he served Lanlivery, was always much esteemed for the decency and regularity of his conduct; having been by a gracious Providence preserved from all gross vices. His conscience, even at that time, dictated to him the necessity of constant diligence in the public duties of preaching and catechising; though he was then unacquainted with those evangelical principles which he afterwards embraced, and taught with so much success in the latter years of his ministry. Nor did he, destitute as he was of the light and motives which influenced his after-conduct, neglect at any season to visit his parishioners, and give them the best counsel and advice he was able. A remarkable instance of his concern for them stands upon record in one of his papers. In the year 1744, being seized with a violent

fever, he sent to a neighbouring gentleman, and dictated to him a letter, which, in case of his death, he desired might be transcribed and given to such of his parishioners as he found neither his preaching nor his private admonitions had wrought any good effect upon, whose names he then desired the gentleman to take down; which is an evidence of his concern for the souls of those under his care.

But, before we proceed further, it may not be amiss to say something concerning Mr. Walker's endowments both in body and mind. As to his person, he was tall in stature, his features were strong and comely, and his deportment such as commanded respect. An air of authority, which was natural to him, usually struck an impression of awe, at the first interview, upon those that conversed with him: but yet he conducted himself in such a manner, that whilst with a becoming dignity he extorted even from the froward and petulant a respect due to the ministerial character, by his affability and readiness either in communicating his own thoughts, or attending to what was said by others, he rendered himself an agreeable companion to those who were willing either to impart or to receive instruction.

In his conversation he discovered an uncommon depth of thought, and delivered his sentiments with readiness of expression on any subject. His understanding was remarkably clear, and continued so to the very last. He was possessed of a quick apprehension, a solid judgment, and a retentive memory. The faculty which appeared in a more distinguishing manner was his methodical exactness and propriety in the arrangement of his thoughts, and the distribution of the several parts of the subject he undertook to elucidate. This is to be discerned throughout his writings. And when his friends have observed to him that he usually discovered great accuracy and propriety in dividing the matter of his Discourses, he was wont at such times to say, that logic had been a favourite study with him from his youth. And indeed he generally took an opportunity of recommending an improvement in the art of logic to younger Divines, who consulted him upon the prosecution of their studies. He cautioned them to beware of quoting scraps of Scripture, as they stand by themselves, and building opinions thereon which the context would not



authorize. In opposition to this slothful custom, he advised them to consider each passage with reference to what went before and what followed after; and likewise to mark with attention what analogy it bore to the general plan of salvation by grace. This circumstance might, perhaps with more propriety, have been reserved to be mentioned hereafter; but as I was speaking of his intellectual endowments, it naturally occurred to me in this place.

But to return: Our Author, as it was mentioned, quitted Lanlivery, and settled at Truro in the year 1746; at which time he was universally esteemed not only in his private character, but likewise for the regular discharge of the duties of his pastoral function.

Some of my readers may perhaps ask, "If Mr. Walker bore so respectable a character at his first coming to Truro, what occasion had he either to make any alteration in his principles, or to new-model his conduct?" I will therefore endeavour to give an answer to this question, which concerns a most important crisis in his life, in as clear and satisfactory a manner as I am able.

It is hardly to be supposed that a man of his strong sense and solidity of judgment should be induced to differ so entirely from his former self, if he had not seen sufficient ground to believe that he had been totally mistaken. There never was a man less likely to be deceived by any enthusiastic impressions, of which he was always so jealous, that it was his constant rule to watch over the reasonings of his own mind, to compare all its conclusions with the plain sense of Scripture, and to lay no stress on any thing that was not warranted by an agreement with that unerring rule. Thus was he guarded against the delusive sallies of a lively imagination; neither was he more likely to be misled by a deference to the authority of others, whatever his opinion or esteem of them might be; but what he saw for himself required in the word of God, as matter of faith or practice, that and that only he thought himself bound to believe and do. And he was so much afraid of leading others into that blind submission to his judgment, which he would not pay himself to any human authority, that he made it always a part of his advice to those whom he instructed, not to give their assent to any thing he should tell them because he said it; but to go to their Bible, and to search the Scriptures, that their faith

might not be built upon man's authority, but only upon divine testimony. It was not therefore without reason that he submitted to a change, which arose from the most deliberate and well-grounded conviction.

Did religion require nothing more than external decency of manners, it must certainly be allowed that he was under no necessity of reformation. But to make the necessity of such a change a little more intelligible to those of my readers, who may have hitherto neglected to consult the interests and attend to the concerns of their own immortal souls, I must take leave to remind them, that there is an essential and very important difference between the external professor of Christianity and the real internal Christian: that to depend upon regularity in observing the outward modes of worship, upon acts of benevolence and kindness, upon abstaining from gross injustice and scandalous vices; that, in short, to appear outwardly blameless unto men, to make a fair shew in the flesh, and thereby to stifle and appease the admonitions and accusations of conscience, which was just our Author's former case, is the utmost height of the religion of those, who take up with the form of godliness void of the power thereof; but that the real Christian, without being less careful to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith he is called, and to adorn his profession by the practice of every thing that is amiable and praiseworthy, is further taught to look carefully to the state of his heart and affections, and to examine the principles which actuate his conduct. He is filled with an habitual and earnest desire to be conformed, in the inward temper and disposition of his soul, to the image of him who bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that all who believe in him might not perish, but have eternal life. He strives to mortify all the corrupt inclinations, both of the flesh and of the mind; to renounce his own will in every instance, where it rises in any degree of opposition to that of God; to be valiant in the cause of God and his truth; and resolute in bearing, with meekness and patience, the troubles he will unavoidably meet with for conscience-sake: such, and so different from his former self, was our Author after this important change had taken place in him.

If the reader is sensible of the difference, which I have faintly

endeavoured to represent between the real and nominal Christian, he will see the necessity of such a change, and his question will be answered to his satisfaction.

I beg leave, however, to add a few words more, now I am upon this subject.

As Christians, we are commanded to regulate all our actions with a single eye to the glory of God, and to the good of mankind. But neither the one nor the other of these motives appear to have any sway over our hearts, as long as our religion is confined merely to the observance of external performances. On the contrary, a selfish, earthly, and sensual disposition, cloaked under a mask of godliness, seems to direct the whole bent of our inclinations, while we serve God, not out of a principle of love, but of slavish fear; and while our affection to our neighbour knows not more extensive bounds than that of publicans and sinners, in loving those only that love us. Pride itself will often put us upon doing many duties which will make us appear outwardly righteous to men; and fear of shame, of injuring our worldly interest, or other temporary considerations, will restrain us from the actual commission of many sins to which our hearts are strongly inclined. It is one thing to perform an outward work of righteousness, it is another to perform that work out of a pure disinterested view to the glory of God. The natural man, who proposeth no other end but self-gratification in some shape or other, will counterfeit many acts of piety; but it is the privilege of the new-born Christian alone to aim singly at the glory of God from a motive of real love to him, arising out of a sense of his having first loved us. Where the fruits of holiness are regularly and constantly brought forth, there we are obliged in charity to suppose that the tree is good, and that they spring from a living principle in the heart. But where this uniformity of conduct is wanting, and religion dares to shew itself no further than is consistent with the favour of the world, and cautiously declines the taking up of the cross; there, notwithstanding many things may be discerned which are lovely and of good report, yet, when the state of such a man's heart is searched to the bottom, it is very probable that which is highly esteemed among men will be found to be an abomination in the sight of God.

The wo denounced by our Saviour against the Scribes and Pharisees is equally applicable to the formal professors of this and every age. Ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones and of all uncleanness. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And unless the image of God, which we lost by the fall of our first parents, be restored by an entire renovation wrought in the spirit of our minds, whatever our outward carriage may be, we still remain natural men, dead in trespasses and sins. This our Author found to be the case with himself.

It was not owing, as we have shewn, to any sudden flight of his own imagination, nor to his being led away by the influence of others, that he altered his manner of thinking, preaching, and living; but to a deep and solid conviction, founded upon express testimony of Scripture, that he had hitherto acted altogether upon wrong principles, by which he saw the necessity of putting off the old man, and putting on the new. His best deeds, he found, were full of sin in themselves, and the result of bad or mistaken motives. His heart being laid open to him by the word of God, he discovered in himself an absence of every thing spiritually good, and a propensity to what is evil. It became plain to him, that a corrupted nature, lying at the bottom of those very actions which had gained him the applause of men, had defiled and rendered them blameworthy in the sight of God.

The occasion of his being brought to this knowledge of himself was as follows. About a year after he came to Truro, being in company with some friends, the subject of whose conversation turned upon the nature of justifying and saving faith, he, as he freely owned afterwards, became sensible that he was totally unacquainted with that faith which had been the object of the discourse, and also convinced that he was destitute of something, which was of the greatest importance to his own as well as to the salvation of the people committed to his charge. He said nothing at that time of the concern he was brought under to any one of the company, but was ever afterwards, as opportunity offered, ready to enter upon the subject. He began to discover that he had hitherto been ignorant of the nature of Gospel salvation, inat-

tentive to the spiritual state of his own soul and the souls of others, and governed in all his conduct not by the only Christian motives of love to God and man, but purely by such as were wholly sensual and selfish; he found that he was a slave to the desire of man's esteem; and, in short, as he himself expressed it, that all had been wrong both within and without.

Upon this discovery he applied himself with diligence and fervent prayer to the study of the Holy Scriptures; and having by these means gained a further insight into the nature of man's spiritual disorder, and of the remedy afforded in the Gospel, this necessarily led him to make a considerable alteration in his preaching, both as to the choice of his subjects and the manner of his address. Convinced that the divine testimony was the only sure ground of a divine faith, he was careful to assert nothing that was not immediately drawn from the word of God, it being now his great aim and study, to use his own phrase, to be a good Bible Divine.

But of all these particulars the reader will gain a clearer knowledge from the following meditation, written by him at his return from a meeting of neighbouring Clergymen, who met together for the purpose of religious conversation.

“ Seeing the Gospel revelation is a dispensation of grace; a  
 “ remedy for a fallen creature; we must needs be sensible of  
 “ those effects which the fall hath had on us, ere we can make a  
 “ right use of the Gospel.

“ For my own part, I lived many years in an entire ignorance  
 “ of a corrupted nature; although I had learnt to reason in a spe-  
 “ culative and historical way upon man's degeneracy. Since it  
 “ hath pleased God in some measure to enlighten the eyes of my  
 “ understanding, I look back upon those days of blindness, and  
 “ plainly see that while I kept to an external customary decency,  
 “ and in some sense regularity, I was influenced by and acted  
 “ upon two hidden principles, as contrary to God as darkness is  
 “ to light; the one, a prevailing desire of reputation and being  
 “ esteemed, which went through all I did, followed me into all  
 “ companies, dictated all I said, led me to compliance often in  
 “ direct opposition to conscience, made me above all things fear-

“ ful of being thought little of, directed all my sermons, both in  
 “ writing and in speaking them, and in short swayed my whole  
 “ life, till, I hope, the few latter years of it: the other, a desire  
 “ of pleasure, which rendered me slothful, indolent, and restless  
 “ out of company, eager after amusements, &c. ; but this was so  
 “ subordinate to the other, that I was always best delighted with  
 “ such entertainments as gave me opportunity of setting off any  
 “ excellence I might seem to have; such as music and dancing.  
 “ By these two the strong man kept the palace of my heart, and  
 “ all was peace; and that in so strange a manner, that I do not  
 “ recollect the least suspicion of my being out of the way, for I  
 “ had learned to rest upon my freedom from the grossest vices,  
 “ and keeping a sort of strictness in attending upon the forms of  
 “ my ministry, and especially in engaging others to attend them.  
 “ Were I to say with how many heart-felt pangs of fear and  
 “ inquietude I have been brought during these latter years to  
 “ any reasonable measure of indifference about the esteem of the  
 “ world, I should describe the passages which have most en-  
 “ grossed my mind. The love of pleasure decayed first; but yet  
 “ I could only part with it by degrees: and many things of that  
 “ sort I continued in, when I had no pleasure in them, because I  
 “ was ashamed to leave them.”

In a letter from a Clergyman concerning the first question  
 in the Office for the ordaining of Deacons, published in 1758,  
 Mr. Walker says of himself—

“ As I was ignorant of the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, and  
 “ of my want of him in all his offices, so I had not taken the least  
 “ notice of the spiritual state of others. It was to me as a thing  
 “ I had no concern with, that sins of the grossest kind were com-  
 “ mitted on every side of me. And after I was ordained, I had  
 “ no sight or thought of the condition my parishioners were in,  
 “ though I had some desire that they should come to church and  
 “ sacrament, and not drink, swear, and the like.”

But the whole of this matter is explained more at large in a  
 letter written by him in the year 1753 to a friend in London,  
 wherein he gives a particular account of his ministry at Truro  
 from the very beginning.

“ In the year 1746 I undertook (as Curate) the charge of this

“ populous and large town, in many respects the principal town  
 “ in the county. God knows upon what unworthy views I did  
 “ it, and how utterly disqualified my heart and head were for my  
 “ ministerial trust. I had been then some years Vicar of a neigh-  
 “ bouring parish. But, dear Sir, how must I have suffered the  
 “ poor souls there to starve and perish, while I was only possessed  
 “ of historical notions of all the vitals of Christianity ! The cor-  
 “ ruption of man’s nature, his misery and helplessness ; the satis-  
 “ faction and sufficiency of Christ ; the necessity of a renewed  
 “ mind ; the need of the work of the Spirit : these I knew no-  
 “ tionally, but neither felt nor taught them practically. You  
 “ must own I ought to go sorrowing to the grave upon a review  
 “ of six years so passed over. Nevertheless I was thought well of,  
 “ and indeed esteemed beyond most of my brethren for my regu-  
 “ larity, decency, endeavours to keep up external attendances,  
 “ and somewhat or other in my public addresses. Would to God  
 “ I were the only one intrusted with the Gospel in these circum-  
 “ stances ! It was at least a year after the kind Providence of God  
 “ brought me hither ere I fell under considerable suspicions or  
 “ uneasiness about myself and my manner of preaching ; when,  
 “ by the frequent conversation of a Christian friend (verily  
 “ the first person I had met with truly possessed of the mind of  
 “ Christ), I became sensible all was wrong within and without.  
 “ My uneasiness was rather abiding than violent, possibly be-  
 “ cause my life had been free of gross sins, having been used in a  
 “ good measure to follow the direction of my conscience ; and the  
 “ change wrought upon me was slow, till under a variety of  
 “ means I was brought to the knowledge of the truth as it is in  
 “ Christ Jesus.”

In the beginning of the above account our Author reflects with  
 concern upon the unworthy views which prevailed upon him to un-  
 dertake the Curacy of Truro. In order to acquaint the curious  
 reader what these unworthy views were, I shall here interrupt the  
 narrative to inform him, that in many private conversations he  
 often told me that he was not actuated by the least measure of a  
 ministerial spirit at the time of his first coming to Truro ; but that  
 his only motive in going to live in that populous town, in pre-  
 ference to any other place in the county, was the greater resort of

company, and that he might take his pleasure at the assemblies, and particularly in dancing. Such was the bent of his inclinations before he was partaker of the grace of God in truth. He was naturally a lover of pleasure more than a lover of God.

The letter goes on :—

“ As this work was going forward in myself, the people were  
 “ made partakers of the effects of it ; by-and-by I began to deal  
 “ with them as lost sinners, and beat down formality and self-  
 “ righteousness, and to preach Christ. The fruit of this, by the  
 “ mighty working of the Spirit, quickly appeared. It was a new  
 “ way to them. They were surprised and grew angry, not with-  
 “ out an evident fear resting upon them, and an interesting cu-  
 “ riosity to hear me again of this matter. I have reason to judge  
 “ that almost all of them have been, one time or other, awakened  
 “ more or less, although I fear many of them have rejected the  
 “ counsel of God against themselves. But, in the mean time,  
 “ some, more sensibly pricked in their hearts, came to me  
 “ inquiring what they must do. The number of these con-  
 “ tinually increasing, I thought my utmost diligence was need-  
 “ ful towards them. They were universally ignorant in the  
 “ grossest degree. I was glad to give them as many evenings in  
 “ the week as I could spare, appointing them to attend me, after  
 “ their work was over, at my house. As there was no know-  
 “ ledge of divine things amongst them, and in consequence  
 “ thereof they were incapable of instructing one another ; and,  
 “ withal, as they were marked out by reproach, and had every  
 “ art tried upon them to draw them away ; they needed from me  
 “ both instructions and cautions, which I was obliged for these  
 “ reasons to give them, either singly, or by two or three to-  
 “ gether. This I have continued to do to the present time, with  
 “ no other variation but that of using the help of those, who had  
 “ made any progress, to watch over beginners.

“ I had from the first engaged them frequently to converse to-  
 “ gether, and pray with one another, as I could put them to-  
 “ gether ; and though the far greater part of them fell away from  
 “ their awakenings, yet when a number of them seemed to be  
 “ somewhat confirmed, they of their own accord met together in  
 “ larger bodies in their own houses, to read God's word, pray,



“ sing psalms, &c. This became pretty much practised about  
 “ two years ago, and herein I have left them to themselves, only  
 “ giving them directions as need required.

“ By the grace of God, the number of those, whose conduct  
 “ seemed to express a lively faith, began now to be something  
 “ considerable, for which reason, about the latter end of last sum-  
 “ mer, it was thought advisable to form them into a religious so-  
 “ ciety, which, after some delays, was effected in the beginning  
 “ of February. The number of members is now upwards of  
 “ seventy\*.

“ While I was deliberating about this society, which was to  
 “ consist of such only as gave hopes of an edifying example, it  
 “ was thought proper to call together as many others as were  
 “ willing, in my house, once a week, as a sort of nursery for the  
 “ principal society: and, by talking and praying with them, we  
 “ seem to have found some establishment among those who are  
 “ weaker.

“ This hath been the progress of the work among ourselves,  
 “ wherein I have reason to believe we have been much for-  
 “ warded by the blessing of the Spirit upon a free and practical  
 “ exposition of the Church Catechism, which I have, after my  
 “ poor measure, made by word of mouth, the Sunday-evenings of  
 “ half the year, an hour after service.

“ I have to add further, as that which I doubt not will give  
 “ you pleasure, that, not long after the commencement of this  
 “ work at Truro, several Clergymen of us in the neighbourhood  
 “ associated ourselves under the name of the Parsons' Club, for  
 “ mutual consultation and direction, in order to promote the  
 “ great end of our ministry.”

In this letter Mr. Walker makes mention of two societies: the one, of the more serious people of the town of Truro; the other, of some of the neighbouring Clergymen. Concerning each of these it will not, I presume, be disagreeable to the reader to hear somewhat more particularly; and it will be equally pleasing to me to lay before him the nature and design of these religious meetings, and the rules which each member was obliged to con-

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\* It was afterwards considerably increased.

form to; as I am in hopes that by these means I may not only vindicate them from the imputation of being anywise offensive or contrary to the good order and discipline of the Church, but also show forth their utility.

The former society, consisting of the more serious part of Mr. Walker's congregation at Truro, was divided into two classes: one of men, into which no woman could be admitted; another of married men, their wives, and other women, into which no unmarried man could be admitted. Each class meets every other week alternately. In drawing up the rules for the government of this society, Mr. Walker chiefly followed the plan laid down by the Rev. Dr. Josiah Woodward, in his treatise written in Queen Anne's time, under the title of *An Account of the Rise and Progress of the Religious Societies in and about London, and of their Endeavours for the Reformation of Manners*. Which little book our Author dispersed amongst his people at Truro, at the time of their first assembling in this manner, purposely to remove every ground of prejudice, because in this tract the most considerable objections against religious societies are fully answered.

The whole proceedings of this society are as follow:

*Considerations laid before the Members of the Society, being the Substance of the first Charge, or Exhortation, spoken at its Opening by the Director.*

‘ BRETHREN,

‘ YOU expect that I lay before you the design of this society, and give you some cautions concerning it. The design is three-fold: 1. To glorify God. 2. To be quickened and confirmed ourselves. 3. To render us more useful among our neighbours.

#### I.

‘ As a society we shall be better able to glorify God; for hereby we bear a more evident testimony to the cause of Christ, and make a more avowed confession of him and his words, in these evil days, than we could do when separate.

‘ Every one of you desires that the kingdom of Jesus Christ  
 ‘ were more established, and more honourable in the world than  
 ‘ it is, and you join your hand with others to promote so desirable  
 ‘ an end.

‘ Take these cautions for this purpose:—

‘ 1. Look upon yourself as one associated with others in vindication of your Master’s honour.

‘ 2. Never be ashamed of him or his doctrine, or of this society.

‘ 3. Demean yourself to every one as his disciple, by walking in humility, meekness, heavenly-mindedness, and charity, after Christ’s example.

‘ 4. Keep yourself heedfully from all things which may disgrace your Master and this society; such as pride in a conceit of your knowledge or attainments, or that you are a member of this society.—Valuing yourself upon any distinction in station or wealth.—Sinking into a worldly frame,—or declining into sloth and idleness.—Practising the least dishonesty, or conniving at the dishonesty of others.—Making compliances to avoid shame or to promote worldly interest.—Falling into lukewarmness, and forgetting your first love.—Slighting public ordinances.

‘ 5. Often, especially before and after great trials, reflect that you belong to a religious society for promoting the glory of Christ.

## II.

‘ The second design of this society is to be quickened and confirmed ourselves. For hereby we shall be better able to maintain the war against our enemies, especially against the world, and to grow in grace; seeing in this association we may expect the Spirit to bless our exercises:—shall have the benefit of mutual advice and reproof:—shall be more hardy to oppose the temptations besetting us in this wicked world:—shall walk under a peculiar restraint, as being members of a religious society:—and shall be assisted by the prayers, as of one another, so of all good men in the whole Christian church. To this end:—

‘ 1. Watch over one another in love.

‘ 2. Be willing to hear of your faults, and of the fears and suspicions of these your friends concerning you.

‘ 3. Be watchful against any disgust to one another; and if any arises in you, without delay tell the party, and if that avail not tell the Director.

‘ 4. Desire the prayers one of another, and pray for one another.

‘ 5. Be sure you rest not on your being a member of this society,—seek continually to cast off all self-dependence.

‘ 6. Watch the least decay of love to Christ, or of zeal for his honour and the good of souls.

‘ 7. Confirm continually upon your heart the obligations you lie under as a member of a religious society.

### III.

‘ The third design of this society is to render us more useful among our neighbours.—Hereby we are more observable.—People will not be so easily quiet in their sins.—Good examples carry a brighter and more convincing light, confounding the works of darkness. To this end :—

‘ 1. Be careful to set a Christian example before the world.

‘ 2. Think not to gain any by making compliances.

‘ 3. Discountenance all such things as you see prejudicial to others, such as taverns, alehouses, gaming, and many sports which are destructive to souls.

‘ 4. Shew all love to men's souls and bodies.

‘ 5. Avoid all disputings, which proceed from pride, and nurse contention and variance.

‘ 6. Do not be angry with those who blame this society, but meekly and silently bear with them.

‘ 7. Do not in your heart despise others, because they are not members of this society ;—

‘ 8. Nor shew any valuing of yourselves because you are.—Never speak of yourself as a member, unless with a view of doing others good.’

### MOTIVES.

‘ 1. Real disciples do more than nominal professors.

‘ 2. The Spirit will strengthen and comfort you.

‘ 3. You will have the blessing of a quiet conscience.

‘ 4. You are engaged in the most honourable service.

- ‘ 5. You will promote the interest of your Master.  
 ‘ 6. He will acknowledge your labours in the day of his appearing. Amen. So be it.’

*RULES agreed upon for the Government of the SOCIETY.*

**RULE I.**

‘ As the sole design of this society is to promote real holiness in heart and life, every member of it is to have this continually in view, trusting in the divine power, and gracious conduct of the Holy Spirit, through our Lord Jesus Christ, to excite, advance, and perfect all good in us.’

**RULE II.**

‘ That in order to the being of one heart, and one mind, and to prevent all things which gender strifes, as well as to remove all occasion of offence from being taken against this society, no person is to be admitted a member, or allowed to continue such, who is a member of any other meeting, or follows any other preaching than that of the established ministry of the Church of England.—That none be members but such as attend the Sacrament every month, and that no person be at any time introduced except by request of the Director.’

**RULE III.**

‘ That no person be admitted a member but upon the recommendation of the Director, with the consent of the majority of members then present.—And that the Director be the Rev. Mr. Walker.’

**RULE IV.**

‘ That the members of this society meet together one evening in a week at a convenient place, and that they go home at nine o’clock.—And that all matters of business be done before the sentences begin.’

**RULE V.**

‘ That every member give constant attendance, and be present at the hour of meeting precisely.—And that whoever absents himself four meetings together, without giving a satisfactory account

‘ to the Director, which shall by him be communicated to the society, shall be looked upon as disaffected to the society.’

#### RULE VI.

‘ That, to prevent confusion, no person be removed from this society but by the Director, who shall be present on such occasions.—That any member do beforehand apply to the Director, in case he judges such removal necessary.—That a disorderly \* carriage, or a proud, contentious, disputing temper, (the greatest adversary to Christian love and peace,) be sufficient ground for such complaint and removal.’

#### RULE VII.

‘ That all the members, considering the sad consequences of vanity and amusements over the nation, do, in charity to the souls of others, as well as to avoid the danger of such things themselves, look upon themselves as obliged to use peculiar caution, with respect to many of the usual amusements, however innocent they may be, or be thought, in themselves; such as cards, dancings, clubs for entertainment, playhouses, sports at festivals and parish-feasts, and, as much as may be, parish-feasts themselves; lest, by joining herein, they should be a hinderance to themselves or their neighbours.’

#### RULE VIII.

‘ That, with the consent of the Director, the major part of the society have power to make a new order when need requires, but that the proposal for this purpose be made by the Director.—And that any member may consult the Director hereupon before the day of meeting.’

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\* By a disorderly carriage we mean, not only the gross commission of scandalous sins, but also what are esteemed matters of little moment in the eyes of the world; such as a light use of the words Lord, God, Jesus, &c. in ordinary conversation; which we cannot but interpret as an evidence of the want of God's presence in the heart.—The doing needless business on the Lord's day.—The frequenting alehouses or taverns without necessary business.’

## RULE IX.

‘ That persons disposed to become members of this society must first be proposed by the Director, in order that the members of the society may observe their conduct for the space of three months before admittance.’

## RULE X.

‘ That every member do consider himself as peculiarly obliged to live in an inoffensive and orderly manner, to the glory of God and the edifying his neighbours.—That he study to advance, in himself and others, humility, faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, love to God, Gospel repentance, and new obedience; wherein Christian edification consists.—And that, in all his conversation hereupon, he sticks close to the plain and obvious sense of the Holy Scriptures, carefully avoiding all niceties and refinements upon them.’

## RULE XI.

‘ That these orders shall be read over at least four times in the year by the Director; and that with such deliberation, that each member may have time to examine himself by them.’

## RULE XII.

‘ That the members of this society do meekly and humbly join together in the following offices of devotion :’—

*The OFFICE of DEVOTION used Weekly at the Meeting of the SOCIETY.*

*The Director shall read these Sentences himself, every or standing.*

‘ God is very greatly to be feared in the assemblies of his saints and to be had in reverence by all that are round about  
‘ Psalm lxxxix. 8.’

‘ God is a righteous Judge, strong and patient, provoked every day. Psalm vii. 12.’

‘ God will bring every work into judgment, with thing, whether it be good, or whether it be  
‘ xii. 14.’

‘ He that hideth his sins shall not prosper, but he that confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy. Prov. xxviii. 13.’

‘ If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins. 1 John ii. 1, 2.’

‘ O come let us worship, and fall down, and kneel before the Lord our Maker. Psalm. xcv. 6.’

*Then shall be said these three Collects, all kneeling.*

“ Prevent us, O Lord, in all our doings,” &c.

“ Blessed Lord, who hast caused all Holy Scriptures,” &c.

“ O God, forasmuch as without thee we are not able to please thee,” &c.

*All seating themselves, a Portion of Scripture shall be read ; then kneeling down they shall join in this Confession of Sin.*

“ Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Maker of all things, Judge of all men,” &c.

“ Our Father, which art in heaven,” &c.

*After which the Director alone shall say :*

“ Almighty and everlasting God ! who hatest nothing that thou hast made,” &c.

‘ O most holy and blessed God, the Creator, Governor, and Judge of all ! who hatest falsehood and hypocrisy, and wilt not accept the prayer of feigned lips ; but hast promised to shew mercy to such as turn unto thee by true faith and repentance ; vouchsafe, we pray thee, to create in us clean and upright hearts, through an unfeigned faith in thy Son our Saviour. To us indeed belongeth shame and confusion of face ; we are not worthy to lift up our eyes or our voice towards heaven ; our natures are depraved, and our ways have been perverse before thee. O let not thy wrath rise against us, lest we be consumed in a moment ; but let thy merciful bowels yearn over us, and vouchsafe to purify and pardon us through thine all-sufficient grace and mercy in our Lord Jesus Christ : since it hath pleased thee to offer him up as a sacrifice for sinners, vouchsafe, we beseech thee, to cleanse us from all iniquity through his blood. We be-



' lieve that he is able to save to the uttermost those that come unto  
 ' thee by him, and we do earnestly desire to embrace him as our  
 ' Prince and Saviour; O give us repentance and remission of sins  
 ' through his name. All we like sheep have gone astray, every  
 ' one in his own way; good Lord, reduce us into thy fold through  
 ' this great Shepherd of souls, and be pleased to lay on him the  
 ' iniquity of us all. And as we have much to be forgiven, be  
 ' pleased to incline our hearts to love thee much, who forgivest  
 ' iniquity, transgression, and sin. Give us that faith that worketh  
 ' by love; and such love as will constrain us to have regard to all  
 ' thy commandments. And make us to look carefully to all our  
 ' ways, that we may never again do any thing, whereby thy holy  
 ' name may be blasphemed or thine authority despised.

' Give us the deepest humility, without which we can never be  
 ' accepted of thee, our infinitely condescending God: make us  
 ' continually to tread in the steps of our blessed Lord and Saviour  
 ' Jesus Christ; being of a meek and quiet spirit, always influenced  
 ' by the highest love of thee our God, and by the most charitable  
 ' disposition towards all men.

' Vouchsafe to endue us with a saving knowledge of spiritual  
 ' things, that we may receive all thy truths in the love of them, in  
 ' all patience, purity, justice, temperance, godliness, and bro-  
 ' therly kindness; that we may adorn our holy profession, and  
 ' resemble the divine goodness of thee our heavenly Father.—  
 ' And since we are not only weak and frail, but corrupt and sin-  
 ' ful, vouchsafe, O Lord, to keep us by the power of thy Holy  
 ' Spirit, that we fall not from our avowed steadfastness in all Chris-  
 ' tian duty. Preserve us from all the sin and vanity to which our  
 ' age, condition, and nature are prone, and to which the devil  
 ' and this world may at any time tempt us.

' Glorify, good God, thy strength in our weakness, thy grace in  
 ' our pollution, and thy mercy in our salvation. May our holy re-  
 ' ligion be grounded and settled in our hearts, that, out of the  
 ' good treasure of a gracious heart, our speech may be savoury  
 ' and our conversation exemplary; that we may be fruitful in all  
 ' good works, even to our old age, and to our last day.

' Fit us, we pray thee, for every state of life into which thy Pro-

‘ vidence shall cast us ; prosper our lawful undertakings ; preserve  
 ‘ us night and day, and prepare us for an hopeful death and a  
 ‘ blessed eternity.

‘ Be pleased, we beseech thee, to bless all those societies, who  
 ‘ in truth apply their hearts to thy service and glory ; we pray  
 ‘ thee, be pleased to strengthen, establish, and settle both them  
 ‘ and us in thy holy faith, fear, and love. Let nothing in this  
 ‘ world discourage us from the pursuit of those holy purposes,  
 ‘ which thy Spirit hath at any time put into our hearts and minds.  
 ‘ But make us all faithful to thee our avowed God and desired  
 ‘ portion, even unto death ; that we may at last (with thy whole  
 ‘ church) be partakers of that eternal life and perfect bliss which  
 ‘ thou hast promised through Jesus Christ, thy only-begotten  
 ‘ Son, our Mediator and Redeemer. Amen.’

‘ Almighty and ever-living God, who by thy holy Apostle hast  
 ‘ taught us to make prayers and supplications,’ &c.

*Then all standing up, a Psalm shall be sung, and \* a Sermon  
 read, or a Charge given by the Director ; after which, some  
 suitable Prayer shall be used, as he shall judge fit.*

*Then all standing up, this Exhortation to Humility shall  
 be read.*

‘ My Brethren, since the great God has often assured us in his  
 ‘ holy word,’ “ That he will resist the proud, and give grace unto  
 ‘ the humble, James iv. 6. 1 Peter v. 5.” ‘ Let us consider that  
 ‘ all our undertakings, though never so good, will fail and come  
 ‘ to nought, unless we be truly and dceply humble, Luke xiv. 11.  
 ‘ Indeed it cannot be otherwise ; because the proud person quits  
 ‘ his reliance on God to rest in himself : which is to exchange a  
 ‘ rock for a reed.

‘ Alas ! what are we poor empty things ! Gen. xxxii. 10. Yea,  
 ‘ what is worse, we are condemned perishing sinners ; we have  
 ‘ perhaps understanding now, but God can soon turn it into mad-

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‘ \* The Director, when abroad or indisposed, is to appoint what Sermon  
 ‘ shall be read, and by whom.’

‘ness, Dan. iv. 42. We may have some attainments in grace,  
 ‘but spiritual pride will wither all, and soon reduce us to a very  
 ‘profligate and wretched estate, Isa. lxvi. 2. such as we have  
 ‘seen others fall into, who have begun in the spirit, and  
 ‘ended in the flesh.’ “What have we that we have not re-  
 “ceived?” 1 Cor. iv. 7. ‘And even that, he who gave it may as  
 ‘soon take away.

‘Ye that are young in years, and younger in grace, 1 Tim.  
 ‘iii. 6. are in danger of self-conceit, and of being puffed up;  
 ‘which is a quicksand in which thousands have been swallowed  
 ‘up and perished. It is not in vain that the apostle requires,  
 “that young men be exhorted to be sober-minded,” Tit. ii. 6.  
 ‘Prov. xvi. 18. which he elsewhere explains when he says, “Let  
 “no man think of himself more highly than he ought to think,  
 “but to think soberly,” Rom. xii. 3. Isa. xiv. 12, 13.

‘By pride the angels fell from heaven, 1 Tim. iii. 6. and if ever  
 ‘we climb up to those blessed seats from which they are fallen, it  
 ‘must be by the gracious steps of humility and lowliness of  
 ‘mind, Luke xviii. 14. “Wherefore let him that thinketh he  
 “standeth take heed lest he fall,” 1 Cor. x. 12. “Let us walk  
 “humbly with our God,” and ever have lowly thoughts of our  
 ‘vile selves, Rom. xi. 20. and of our poor attainments, and of  
 ‘our defective performances: and with St. Paul (who was no-  
 ‘thing behind the very chiefest Apostles) let us always say, “I  
 “am nothing,” 2 Cor. xii. 11.

‘Let us therefore now sing to the praise and glory of God, to  
 ‘whom alone praise is due.’

*A Psalm being sung, the Director shall say,*

“It is very meet and right,” &c.

*All shall join,*

‘Therefore with angels and archangels,’ &c.

*The Director alone.*

‘The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, &c. Amen.’

The members of this society, besides convening together, in the  
 manner related above, for the purposes of prayer and reading, as-

semble themselves once a week in smaller numbers to speak to each other concerning their peculiar trials, and to receive the benefit of mutual advice in a free conversation. The time for this meeting is not limited to any particular day or hour, but appointed at such seasons as are most convenient to the parties concerned. By this means it is so contrived as never to interfere with their worldly business, and therefore sometimes they associate early in the morning before service on the Sunday, sometimes in the intervals between service, and at other times in the evenings of a week-day, after their work is over. On these occasions not less than five, or more than eight, are present, who at all other times are inspectors over one another's conduct. Their several distributions are allotted suitably to their age, condition, and circumstances, that so, their trials being nearly the same, they might be better able to strengthen and exhort each other. The married men meet together by themselves, the unmarried by themselves, and so the women in like manner. In order to avoid confusion, and to put them into a proper method of carrying on such a design with due order and regularity, Mr. Walker drew up a small treatise, which he styled, *Regulations and Helps for promoting religious Conversation among Christians.*

In this tract it is proposed, that a select number of Christian friends do meet together weekly, for improving each other in Christian knowledge and practice by the grace of God. The following regulations are submitted to consideration as proper to preserve order, and to promote the ends designed by such a meeting:—

### REGULATION I.

‘ That every person come to the meeting now proposed with a prepared heart, expecting, through divine grace, to receive improvement in saving knowledge, self-conviction, and edification.

‘ II. That the conversation be introduced and ended with prayer.

‘ III. That they speak freely, and lay open their hearts, as far as their own case, or that of others, may require.

‘ IV. That they beware of conceit in delivering their sentiments, and of diffidence in being afraid to speak them.

‘ V. That in the spirit of meekness and humility, counting others better than themselves, they do warn each other of their faults, freely and affectionately examining every thing thoroughly.

‘ VI. That the conversation be confined to the state of one another, and that all prying curiosity be excluded.

‘ VII. That each person be allowed to speak in turn, and that as briefly as possible.—That none be interrupted while speaking; and when all have delivered their sentiments, that the inquirer may then apply what has been said to his own case, and nothing further be said on that subject, unless the inquirer should desire any person more fully to explain himself.

‘ VIII. That each person do carefully examine and watch over his heart, that no disgust be taken against any who have spoken freely to his case, or may seem to have more knowledge or experience than himself.

‘ IX. That they often ask their own hearts, whether they have a desire to come to such conversation? and, if not, why?

‘ X. That afterwards each person carefully recollect and endeavour to improve the conversation.

‘ XI. That what passes in such conversation be not divulged elsewhere.’

To these regulations are annexed proper inquiries concerning growth in humility, faith in Jesus Christ, the love of God and of our neighbour, and divers other interesting points, by way of help for matter of conversation. At some times they proceed in their conferences upon questions taken out of this treatise, at others they speak indiscriminately whatever lies nearest upon their hearts. One constant question is, If either of them have observed any thing unbecoming or suspicious in the conduct of the rest? and each, in their turn, is very free in mentioning such suspicions (if he has any); while the person spoken to is as ready to answer, whether to explain the reasons of such conduct, or to take shame for it, if wrong.

The mutual inquiries into the state of each other's souls being finished, the inquirer for the day (for each succeeds to this office by rotation) concludes with prayer; and, if time permits, they sing a hymn, and then part.

The other society was composed of the neighbouring Clergy, and proper regulations for the conducting such a meeting were assented to by the several members of the club. The end and design of this intercourse among the Clergy is exhibited in the following extract from a letter written by one who was himself engaged in it:—

‘ Mr. Walker was the person who first proposed a friendly  
 ‘ meeting of neighbouring Clergymen, with a view to improve  
 ‘ one another in Christian knowledge, for the better edification of  
 ‘ the people committed to their care, and to encourage each other,  
 ‘ if, as it was likely, any difficulty or opposition should arise to  
 ‘ either of them in the more vigorous discharge of the ministerial  
 ‘ duty. An outcry was soon made against this meeting both by  
 ‘ Clergy and Laity, as if the whole society was methodistically in-  
 ‘ clined; though nothing is more certain than that all the mem-  
 ‘ bers of it were zealously attached to the Church of England, or  
 ‘ present ecclesiastical establishment, both in its doctrine and dis-  
 ‘ cipline. Their number originally consisted of seven, to whom  
 ‘ were afterwards added four others: of whom, before Mr. Walker’s  
 ‘ death, four had died, two had left the meeting through fear of the  
 ‘ world, and two had been removed to a situation too distant to  
 ‘ give attendance. It was proposed to meet seven months in the  
 ‘ year, on the first Tuesday after every full moon, at their several  
 ‘ houses by turns; to meet at ten; to dine at two; to have two  
 ‘ plain dishes of meat, and no more; not to stay later than six  
 ‘ o’clock; and that the person, at whose house the meeting was,  
 ‘ should take care that one only speak at a time, and that no new  
 ‘ matter be brought on the carpet till the matter in question  
 ‘ (whatever it were) should be satisfactorily adjusted.

‘ Whatever subject the conversation turned upon, every mem-  
 ‘ ber of the club was desired to draw up his sentiments in writing  
 ‘ against next club-day, either in the form of a sermon, or what  
 ‘ other form each person saw fit, for the better assurance that the  
 ‘ subject was well digested.

‘ Before the club proceeded to business, they always offered up  
 ‘ their joint prayers to God for his blessing, in a form collected  
 ‘ by Mr. Walker, from the Liturgy, The whole Duty of Man, and  
 ‘ Mr. Jenks’s Devotions.

‘ The following queries were thought proper for every member to put to himself often :—

‘ Query 1. What is it that I have in view, or what is my mind chiefly engaged upon? Is it the setting forth of God’s glory? or, is there some worldly meaner matter, which has as much room in my thoughts as that?

‘ 2. When I sit down to make a sermon, or when I go into the pulpit to preach it, is my mind running on the performing of a task, or on gaining esteem by performing it well? or, am I chiefly concerned to do something for God?

‘ 3. Would I rather that the interest of Christ, whose minister I am, be advanced in the world, though I should thereby forfeit ease and other conveniencies, than favour these, to the neglecting of his interest?

‘ 4. What is my view as a member of this society? How may I know whether I am employing myself here to the best purposes, agreeably to the design of the meeting?

‘ 5. Do I continually look up for divine grace to accompany and prosper my ministrations? And, in this strength, am I often inquiring after the success of my ministry with anxiety? And, relying on Gospel promises for this strength, am I continually seeking it in prayer, public and private?

‘ 6. Am I satisfied with the answer that my conscience makes to these questions, as I could wish to be when I shall be lying on my death-bed, when every thought will sink to the bottom of my soul, and when I am just to be called upon to render up my account of this important charge and ministry?’

We pass on now to give some further account of Mr. Walker and his public labours. Though he had formed to himself a plan of happiness in the enjoyment of his ease, in the company of his friends, and in partaking of pleasurable amusements; it pleased the God of all grace to convince him of the error of his way, and to cut out a work of a far different nature for the employment of his thoughts and time, by making use of him as an instrument in his hands to turn many from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. The work of grace went on gradually in his own soul. Nor was it without much self-denial and opposition to

his fears and his connexions in life that he began to declare to others the convictions which had newly impressed his heart. Being caressed by all companies, wherever he went, as a man of good understanding and good manners, he was called upon to give up many of the choicest comforts of this life for the sake of the Gospel; because he evidently foresaw, that, unless his former companions should be brought to experience the same change which he had entered upon, they would at least look cool upon him, if not separate him from their company, or perhaps cast a slur upon his reputation. How great a trial this is to a man who is naturally fond of esteem, those only can be proper judges who have themselves been under the same difficult circumstances. Yet, in despite of every carnal and selfish motive, which the love of ease, the apprehensions of shame, or the fear of men's faces, might suggest to the contrary, the Lord preserved him faithful to the light he had received, and emboldened him to make an open and unreserved profession of the truth, in proportion as he himself became acquainted with it.

The same zeal that influenced his private conduct appeared also in his discharge of the duties of the ministry. In his public addresses from the pulpit, of which he seldom omitted to prepare a new one for every Sunday, he endeavoured rightly to divide the word of truth, by distributing to each of his audience a portion suitable to their several states. Having in view the glory of God and the salvation of the souls committed to his charge, as the great end of his preaching, he studied not so much to please the ear as to inform the mind and amend the heart. To this end he applied with closeness and energy the spirituality of God's law, together with the curses denounced against the transgressor, to the careless sinner, in order to beget in him a conviction of his lost estate, and to awaken him to a sense of his danger. The more decent formalist (who differs from the former in restraining himself from acts of grosser sin and in observing the externals of religion, while his heart continues unhumbled and unconverted) he flattered not on account of his fair outside, but faithfully represented to him the folly and absurdity of resting in a form of godliness void of the power thereof.

To the serious Christian, who was already made sensible of the



corruption of his nature, and desired to serve God in spirit and in truth in the way of his appointed ordinances, he laid open the plan of the Gospel in its various parts, as a scheme devised by infinite Wisdom for the recovery of sinful fallen creatures: to such as, by the renunciation of their own wisdom, righteousness, and strength, were prepared to receive a proffered salvation, he preached Christ Jesus, a Prophet both willing and able to teach them by the co-operation of his word and Spirit; a Priest to intercede for them by the meritorious sacrifice of his death; and a King to protect and govern them by sending the sacred influence of his Spirit into their hearts. Thus he taught the true believer to behold his sins expiated in the blood of the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world; to see his person accepted in the righteousness of his Redeemer, and to rest in nothing short of a real and universal change in heart and life, that he might become a new creature created in Christ Jesus unto good works. Nor is it to be forgotten, that, while he endeavoured both to beget and to improve the divine life in the hearts of his audience, he strenuously enforced, as an eminent part of it, the necessity of observing the relative and social duties in civil life. Besides this general tendency of his sermons, he occasionally enlarged upon such subjects as by his continual intercourse with his people he perceived it expedient for him to speak upon. His discourses, after he had preached them, were read on the Sunday evening in the society, and afterwards handed from one to another, by which means the matter of them was more deeply imprinted on the minds of the hearers, and the knowledge of religion more generally dispersed. Besides his stated sermons on Sunday mornings, there were other occasional sermons, called Gift Sermons, established by former benefactions, on some week-days. And on all the Christmas holidays, on the Easter and Whitsun holidays, he had always lectures in the afternoons on some portion of Scripture, either relating to the season, or else such as were suitable to the state of the more serious part of the congregation which attended him. This struck an awe into the place, and prevented manifold abuses, such as players and cock-fightings, &c. against which he openly bore his testimony. But his heart was most set upon the much-neglected duty of catechising, in which he spent

every Sunday evening, from six to eight, from the beginning of February to the end of April, and again from the beginning of August to the end of October. This he did to a very numerous congregation. In the summer he had a lecture every Thursday evening. And in the winter quarter he lectured on Christ's Sermon on the Mount every Sunday evening. All this he did in public, besides his lectures every Tuesday in the society-room, which he was at last prevailed with, on account of his health, to give up: It pleased God, that, in the last two years of his ministry, a considerable number of young people were awakened; on which occasion he set up a private lecture to them in his own room twice in the week in the evening. This meeting was so crowded and so hot, that his friends evidently saw that his strength was much impaired, and that his life would be shortened by it; yet the undertaking seemed to be so charitable a design for the good of young souls, and he was so intent upon it, that they did not care to press him to desist from it. Indeed his compassion to the souls of perishing sinners appeared to be his shining grace; insomuch, that when in conversation any hardened and impenitent sinner was mentioned, he seemed to express an inward pungent distress of soul. His labours hitherto mentioned were publicly known. But his room for private advice was daily frequented, except on Saturdays; which day he always reserved to himself to prepare his discourse for the Sunday; so that from first to last he thought that about a thousand of the inhabitants of the town, besides strangers from the adjacent parts, had been with him for private advice regarding the state of their souls. After he became so much engaged, he had little leisure for studying the works of others; the Bible was then almost the only book he applied himself to; from this sacred fountain he drew that deep and practical knowledge, which his charitable heart was always ready to communicate to others.

After it had pleased God to bless his ministrations at Truro in so remarkable a manner, that the number of people, in whom an appearance of a real change of heart and life was visible, became considerable, he thought that a new and spiritual relation commenced between him and his flock; and accordingly it became his settled judgment that he ought not on any worldly consideration to leave them, unless Providence should open to him a more

extensive field of usefulness to the Church of Christ, or he should be removed by superior authority. This may account for his giving up the Vicarage of Talland, to which he was presented in the year 1747 by the trustees of the will of his late patron, Walter Kendall, Esq. Having the Bishop's leave for absence, he held this Vicarage for a time, till, growing dissatisfied in his conscience concerning the justifiableness of non-residence, he resigned it, and could never afterwards be induced to accept of another living, though he had the offer of four. Yet he went not about this affair with a precipitant zeal, but with his usual calmness of judgment and deliberation, and after consulting some able Divines on the subject of pluralities and non-residence, and among the rest the well-known treatise of the late Dr. Newton. This circumstance, though often talked of between him and his friends, was never mentioned without his expressing at the same time how great a burden he found himself delivered from, when he gave up a charge of souls, whom he had it not in his power to inspect. After this he was not only content but even satisfied in his low circumstances, though they became reduced beyond what might have been reasonably expected: and when he was no longer able to support the expense of housekeeping, he went into poor lodgings; where, though his board and habitation were of the most ordinary kind, yet, as his mind was wholly intent upon spreading the saving knowledge of the Gospel, he lived in peace and calmness.

There yet remains another instance of his love to souls to be taken notice of, which I am unwilling to omit, not only out of respect to his memory, as it shews his unwearied assiduity in promoting the interests of his Master's kingdom, but likewise with a view that others, who have a like opportunity afforded to them, may herein follow his example.

In the beginning of November, in the year 1756, three companies of General Anstruther's regiment of soldiers were sent into winter-quarters at Truro. The zeal of our pious Minister engaged him to set to work to promote the knowledge and practice of religion among them, and it pleased God to give a peculiar blessing to his labours exerted on this occasion. Of this matter I am able to give a more satisfactory account, having by me a letter of

Mr. Walker's, wherein he gives a detail of it to his friend, out of which I present the reader with the following extract:—

“ It is my way in writing to my friends to speak what is most  
“ nearly on my heart, and especially if it be any thing which I  
“ may hope will excite their praises, and engage their interces-  
“ sions in my behalf. Such is the circumstance I have now to  
“ communicate respecting the success of the Gospel among the  
“ soldiers quartered in this town. I endeavoured to lose no time  
“ with them from their first arrival, but without delay preached a  
“ sermon extraordinary on their account on Sunday afternoon,  
“ called by the people here the Soldiers' Sermon. There was at  
“ first great difficulty to get their attendance to hear it; for  
“ though they were ordered to be at church in the morning, and  
“ brought thither by their officers, yet they used to turn off at  
“ the door. In this point I was helped by the zeal of my dear  
“ people of the society, who made it their business to speak to  
“ these poor creatures, giving them proper advice, and prevail-  
“ ing on a few of them to be at church, as was wished. They  
“ soon became a larger number. And our labours were so blessed  
“ to them and us, that in less than three weeks a full hundred of  
“ them came to my house, asking what they must do. This was  
“ what I aimed at, an opportunity of personal and free conversa-  
“ tion. The effects have been very striking. One or two of the  
“ whole only excepted, you would have seen their countenances  
“ changing, tears often bursting from their eyes, and confessions  
“ of their exceeding sinfulness and danger breaking from their  
“ mouths. I have scarcely heard such a thing as self-excusing  
“ from one of them; while their desire to be instructed, and un-  
“ common thankfulness for the least pains used upon them by  
“ any of us, have been very remarkable. Such promising symp-  
“ toms gave me great confidence it would come to something,  
“ and more so when I found that many of them were greatly  
“ stirred up to pray. Many of them, as was to be expected,  
“ soon went back. Nevertheless, thus far both they and the  
“ others, who never came near me in private, are plainly influ-  
“ enced, that a certain fear has restrained them from swearing  
“ and cursing, which, when they came hither, was universally

“ their practice; has engaged them to attend public worship,  
 “ and at least so far biassed their conduct, that military punish-  
 “ ments are grown much less frequent among them. There are  
 “ about twenty who have kept close to the means of grace, and  
 “ concerning whom I have encouraging hope that a good work  
 “ is begun in them. Indeed conviction of sin appears to have  
 “ gone deep with them, and they are crying after Christ with  
 “ such marks of godly sorrow as make me hope it is indeed a  
 “ sorrow which worketh repentance unto salvation.

“ These I intend shall be united together, when they leave  
 “ us, under the name of the Soldiers’ Society, having already  
 “ drawn up regulations for the purpose. And while they are  
 “ here they make a part of our society, by the exercises of  
 “ which, as well as by meetings I particularly appoint for their  
 “ use, they seem to be much established. What such a society  
 “ of soldiers may produce amongst that body of men God only  
 “ knows; yet I would comfort myself with the hope it may please  
 “ the Lord it shall go further. It may be observed that seven of  
 “ these, namely, six Scotchmen and one English Dissenter, have  
 “ enjoyed the benefit of religious knowledge in their youth; the  
 “ rest, excepting two, I find totally ignorant of every thing re-  
 “ lating to Christ. And this, their total ignorance, has made  
 “ me lament the superficial use or entire neglect of catechising  
 “ amongst the English Clergy, by which, more than by any  
 “ other thing, I am persuaded the kingdom of darkness and sin  
 “ is established in England.”

At the conclusion of the extract from the above letter it may  
 not be improper to add, that the officers who commanded these  
 companies waited on Mr. Walker purposely to return him their  
 thanks, and to acknowledge their obligations to him for the pains  
 he had taken with their men, and for the reformation begun  
 among them.

Thus were the labours of this faithful Minister of Christ em-  
 ployed in superintending the flock more immediately committed  
 to his care, in giving his advice to those who came to consult him  
 from neighbouring places, and in cultivating a spirit of religion  
 among those who seemed to be more accidentally thrown in his way.  
 To obviate one groundless calumny, with which the careless and

lukewarm have often been apt to charge a life of serious godliness, as if it gave encouragement to the neglect of secular business, it may not be improper to remark, that at the same time that he was earnest in pressing it, upon all that came to him for advice, to seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness as the one thing needful, he never forgot to exhort persons of all conditions and occupations in life to apply themselves with diligence to the duties of their respective callings: telling them, as the strongest argument that could be urged, that the prosperity and tranquillity of their souls would be more effectually promoted by a careful and industrious attention to the business of their station, than by devoting themselves wholly to the study of religion, to the neglect of those employments, which the place that God had assigned them in the world required at their hands. The truth of which observation I have heard confirmed by the experience of those who have hearkened to his counsel in this particular.

His natural sagacity and penetration, improved by a continued attention to the motions of his own heart, in a course of daily circumspection and watchfulness (of which we shall have occasion to speak hereafter), gave him such an insight into the deceitful workings of the human breast, and the nature of the trials wherewith our spiritual adversaries strive to obstruct the operations of divine grace, that it was usual with him, when any came to open their hearts to him, though they were strangers, by asking a few questions relating to the experience of their minds, to tell them what had passed within their breasts, even before they acknowledged it with their own lips. As a skilful physician, when he is made acquainted with the principal and ruling symptoms of a patient's disorder, knows how the whole system of the bodily machine is affected throughout; so this physician of souls, being informed of a prevailing corruption or temptation, could with ease discern what effect it would have upon the whole state of the heart.

We have seen after what manner Mr. Walker addressed himself to those who opened their minds to him in a personal conference. His practice was to examine the disposition of their hearts to the bottom, that he might be the better enabled to advise them how to counteract the growing malady of their disorders, and to direct them to the proper means of recovery. The like vein of

heart-searching doctrine is to be observed throughout his writings. The reader will not find in them a bare system of morality, calculated only to refine and polish the outward manners; our Author laid the foundation of religion deep in a growing discovery and humbling sense of the sinfulness, guilt, and impotence of our fallen nature, that he might the more clearly evince the necessity of our cordially receiving Christ Jesus in his mediatorial offices, as of God made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. Let not human pride then take offence at seeing its corruptions exposed to view; rather let it bow its head to the dust, cover itself with shame and abasement, conscious of its unworthiness; and acknowledge with a becoming thankfulness the gracious interposition of a Redeemer to recover us from our lost estate. But this thankful acceptance of relief through Christ cannot arise but out of a due conviction of our want thereof. Upon this persuasion Mr. Walker, in his discourses delivered from the pulpit, in his conversations, and in his writings from the press, laboured this point, namely, to establish the necessity of becoming acquainted with our fallen state, because on it depends the right manner of our seeking pardon and acceptance with God, through the atoning blood and all-sufficient righteousness of Christ, and of our attaining unto holiness of heart and life by the sanctifying operation of the Holy Spirit in consequence of our being vitally united to him by faith. The following table exhibits a view of his works to the public:—

1. A Sermon on 1 Samuel xx. 3, at the funeral of a young man that was drowned as he was swimming, on Sunday June 3, 1753.
2. *The Christian*; a set of practical Sermons, 1755.
3. A Sermon on Amos iv. 12. preached at Truro, 1756.
4. A Letter from a Clergyman, concerning the first question in the office for the ordaining of Deacons, 1758.
5. Regulations and Helps proposed for promoting religious conversation among Christians.
6. A Discourse on the necessity of being acquainted with our fallen state.
7. A familiar Catechism, 1759.
8. A short Instruction and Examination for the Lord's Supper,

9. A Treatise on Conviction of Sin.

10. A familiar Introduction to the Knowledge of ourselves, 1761.

Several other small Tracts were published monthly by himself and other Ministers.

Of the above-mentioned writings, the *Christian*, a small volume, consisting of eleven Sermons, passed through a second and third edition in the years 1756 and 1759, with a recommendatory Preface written by the Reverend Mr. Thomas Adam, Rector of Wintringham, in Lincolnshire.

The two last treatises, namely, *Conviction of Sin*, and *Familiar Introduction to the Knowledge of ourselves*, were chiefly composed, and the *Instruction and Examination for the Lord's Supper* was revised and enlarged, by our Author in his last illness; at which time, though his bodily strength was almost worn down, and his spirits nearly exhausted with a lingering fever and atrophy; yet such was the vigour of his intellectual powers, that without requiring time to arrange his thoughts, and without hesitating for expression, he dictated to his amanuensis the contents of each of these tracts, as fast as he could commit them to paper, in all the clearness of argument and propriety of diction in which they now appear.

With regard to the Discourses, to which this account of the Author's life is prefixed, it will be requisite to advertise the reader, that it was his design, if it had pleased God to have granted to him the continuance of life and health, to have gone through the whole of the Church Catechism in a set of practical and expository lectures, and afterwards to have sent them abroad into the world; which design had Mr. Walker lived to have accomplished, the Sermons upon the Moral Law, or Ten Commandments, which, as they now appear, are more particularly calculated to serve the purpose of conviction of sin in order to enforce the necessity of taking refuge in Christ for justification, would then have been revised and made public under a different form, as holding forth likewise a rule of life to the believing professor.

The twenty-fifth sermon upon the Catechism, which was preached at Truro on the 27th of April, in the year 1760, and was the last



discourse delivered by our Author in public, deserves our particular notice. The subject is most awful and interesting; and the manner of treating it awakening and affecting. Having in some of the preceding lectures considered in a practical view the resurrection of Christ as Head of his body the Church, his ascension into the highest heavens to prepare a place for his people, and his session at the right hand of God as the great Advocate and Intercessor, pleading continually before the Father the propitiatory sacrifice of his obedience unto death; in this he represents him at his second coming as universal Judge, summoning all mankind before his righteous tribunal. The solemn transactions of the day of judgment being, as should seem to us accidentally, the subject of Mr. Walker's last address to his parishioners, it gave him an opportunity of speaking to them in such a manner, that if he had been actually apprized that it should be his last sermon, he could not have taken his leave of them more properly. After a very serious and earnest expostulation with the careless, idle, pleasure-loving sinner, he concludes with delivering as it were his dying words to a congregation, among whom he had ministered so long a time with so much zeal and assiduity, in this remarkable passage:—

“ Well; we shall all appear before the judgment-seat of  
 “ Christ together. There the controversy between me calling  
 “ upon you by the terrors of the Lord, and you determined to  
 “ abide in your sins, will be decided. There it will appear whe-  
 “ ther your blood will be upon your own heads for your obstinate  
 “ impenitency, or upon mine for not giving you warning. Christ  
 “ will certainly either acquit or condemn me on this behalf; and,  
 “ if I should be acquitted herein, what will become of you? I  
 “ tremble to think how so many words of mine will be brought  
 “ up against you on that day. What will you say, what will you  
 “ answer, how will you excuse yourselves? O sirs, if you will  
 “ not be prevailed upon, you will eternally curse the day that  
 “ you knew me, or heard one word from my mouth. Why,  
 “ why, why will you die with so aggravated a destruction? O  
 “ think of the judgment, think of it, and you will not be able  
 “ to hold it out against your own souls. May the Lord incline  
 “ you to do so; may he cause this word to sink deep into your

“ hearts; may he shew you all your danger; and with an out-  
 “ stretched arm bring you out of the hands of the devil, and  
 “ translate you into the glorious kingdom of his dear Son, to his  
 “ own glory and your unspeakable happiness in the day of the  
 “ appearance of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Even so,  
 “ most mighty God and most merciful Father, for the same  
 “ Jesus Christ's sake !”

With these striking words did this faithful servant of Christ finish his public ministry.

It has been made evident, from the account of his constant attention to the duties of the sacred office, that he spared no pains in using his most diligent endeavours for the promoting of God's glory and the edifying the people committed to his charge: it will now appear, from a few selected extracts, taken from his own papers, that he dictated no rule to others which he did not conform to himself; but that an intimate knowledge of his own heart, and a deep experience of an inward work of divine grace, enabled him to direct others with such peculiar skill under their several trials in the way of salvation. Being himself converted, not to a notional assent remaining in the head, but to a lively operative faith working by love in the deep ground of the heart, he knew after what manner to strengthen his brethren.

*A SPECIMEN of Mr. WALKER'S EXPERIENCES, and of his Watchfulness over his own Heart.*

Sunday, Sept. 17, 1752.—‘ Thursday night last I was visited  
 ‘ with a sudden and violent disorder, which in a few minutes  
 ‘ brought my life into danger. ‘ Such was God's good pleasure.  
 ‘ It was his fatherly goodness hereby to give me a more practical  
 ‘ and interesting sense of death and eternity. Hereby he hath  
 ‘ taught me the great importance of every hour I live; I can say  
 ‘ now I feel it with a more active impression. May I number my  
 ‘ restored days wisely; nor may the things of this life ever more  
 ‘ separate eternal things from before my eyes! may I live to his  
 ‘ glory, who hath thus lengthened my days! Remember, my soul,  
 ‘ in the confusion of the hasty hour, how little thou couldst do;  
 ‘ just no more than present a broken resignation of thyself into

‘ the hands of thy heavenly Father. Remember how thou wast  
 ‘ oppressed with a spiritual insensibility; all the objects of faith  
 ‘ how dead and flat; how without either fear, or hope, or trust in  
 ‘ any degree of lively exercise! Ah, my soul, the dying hour is  
 ‘ not for the work of Religion, for gaining an interest in Christ.  
 ‘ This must be the business of my healthy days. In these I must  
 ‘ seek to humble my soul, renounce myself, cast off all depend-  
 ‘ ence on myself, and on every thing, which by the grace of God  
 ‘ is wrought in me; and, to work out my salvation, drawn by the  
 ‘ love of Jesus, to yield myself to him the purchase of his blood.  
 ‘ Now I must seek peace in believing on the Son of God, and  
 ‘ prove that I have a title to justification through him by all the  
 ‘ evidences of his Spirit working in me. Keep me in this faith,  
 ‘ thou Mediator, with whom I do heartily trust my soul. Yea,  
 ‘ increase this faith in me. And let me know that I belong to thee  
 ‘ by the sanctification of my corrupt nature more and more.  
 ‘ Sunk as I am into the grave and death of sin, let me hear the  
 ‘ powerful voice of thy word, and feel thy quickening influences  
 ‘ upon my heart, and come forth, and live in holy obedience to  
 ‘ thy call. Yea, let me live no more to myself. Thou hast  
 ‘ given me warning, a sufficient summons to be ready, that by-  
 ‘ and-by I must be away. Let me live to thee, that thou mayest  
 ‘ acknowledge me at thy judgment.’

Sunday, March 4, 1753.—‘ By the endurance and goodness  
 ‘ of God I am alive this day, and have been enabled without dis-  
 ‘ turbance to renew the covenant of grace. Praise be to God, my  
 ‘ mind was clear, my conscience quiet; and with due delibera-  
 ‘ tion, and without distraction, I was before the Lord. I must  
 ‘ bless him also that the ordinance was with comfort. Faith  
 ‘ seemed in exercise more than usual, to see, receive, and in some  
 ‘ measure to appropriate Christ to me in communicating.—  
 ‘ Though always I have cause to complain of the hardness of my  
 ‘ heart, yet now I could in some sort mourn and love. I found  
 ‘ heartiness in my purposes of serving the glory and interest of  
 ‘ God in Christ, and was forward to make a full surrender of my-  
 ‘ self, depending upon divine grace. It has been a day with me  
 ‘ signally marked with divine favour. Notwithstanding the in-  
 ‘ sensibility and unbelief of my heart, I am returned rejoicing.

' What now shall I render unto the Lord? It may be, some greater  
 ' trial than ordinary is at hand. Let me be mindful therefore of  
 ' the vows I have this day made. Thy peculiar suit, my soul,  
 ' was that pride might no longer have dominion over us; that the  
 ' loss of men's opinion and esteem might not fright on one side,  
 ' nor the approbation of friends puff us up on the other. We  
 ' sued also for a more enlarged spirit of love, that those who  
 ' speak evil against us, or use us ill for the work's sake, may be  
 ' entertained with compassion and forgiveness, without resent-  
 ' ment or hatred. We sued for this charitable mind and demeanour  
 ' towards those mistaken persons, who, prejudiced to their own  
 ' opinions, represent us as not preaching the word of God  
 ' soundly. Lord, it is thy pleasure to try me with the reproaches  
 ' of the wanton and careless; and with the misapprehensions of  
 ' those, who, having conceived unsafe evidences of faith, blame  
 ' me that I speak not as they do, and ignorantly oppose them-  
 ' selves. Lord, keep me in a charitable temper to endure with  
 ' meekness the outrages of the one and the prejudiced mistakings  
 ' of the other of these, betwixt whom my lot is fallen to me!  
 ' We entreated also thy blessing on our Society of Ministers.  
 ' Grant, O God, that it may be a blessed instrument of reviving  
 ' true practical religion! Keep us from pride and debate, and  
 ' jealousy! Grant us to watch over one another in love! and be  
 ' thou ever with us enlarging all our hearts with zeal, constancy,  
 ' and charity, and mortifying the world and our lusts continually,  
 ' that as we are separated to the ministry, we may mind this one  
 ' thing, to feed the sheep. And to me, O my God, give all  
 ' needful direction, that I may speak boldly and prudently among  
 ' them, humbly and affectionately, without pride or resentment.  
 ' See now, my soul, the work before thee, but shrink not; re-  
 ' member how God hath visited thee this day. Be strong and of  
 ' good courage, and yet be fearful lest thou let any thing of all  
 ' this slip. Thou great Shepherd, leave me not. Amen.'

Tuesday, April 27, 1756.—' I have found myself this day  
 ' greatly exercised by fear of men. I would, I hope, be, and live,  
 ' wholly to God's glory, and act as his interests require; but I  
 ' experience a lurking desire of man's esteem mixing with the  
 ' natural timidity of my constitution, which makes me inwardly

‘ draw back from any approaching trial, in which I am to look in  
 ‘ the face persons of an angry and violent temper. It is to the  
 ‘ free and mighty influence of the Spirit of God I owe it, that  
 ‘ this fear hath not dominion ; and that, in despite of it, I am en-  
 ‘ abled to persist in the ways of God and the discharge of my  
 ‘ duty, in opposition to this secret enemy. Yet I have reason to  
 ‘ suspect, that, though it doth not hinder me from doing, yet it  
 ‘ cramps me in doing. I desire to wait with patience, to be  
 ‘ humbled, to be thankful for the measure of liberty bestowed  
 ‘ on me, and to believe always that his grace is sufficient for me.

‘ How hard is it to be angry and sin not ! as much as self mixes  
 ‘ it is sinful. I think not more than twice in my life have I been  
 ‘ angry without plainly seeing sin. I suppose true Gospel ζήλος  
 ‘ does not ruffle the temper, nor leave any perturbation behind  
 ‘ it. It must be perfectly consistent with meekness, and is  
 ‘ sinful, if not accompanied with compassion :’ “ He looked  
 ‘ about upon them with indignation, being grieved at the hard-  
 ‘ ness of their hearts.” ‘ Surely our zeal and meekness bear  
 ‘ proportion to our humility. I have most zeal and least wild fire  
 ‘ when I am most humbled in the sense of my sins. Lord, make  
 ‘ me humble ! Lord, keep me humble !’

Tuesday, June 15, 1756.—‘ I know not how many evil tempers  
 ‘ I have found working this day ; particularly conceit, when  
 ‘ conversing with —— . I have been kept from trials this day ;  
 ‘ so can say nothing what degrees of prevalence I am under of fear  
 ‘ of men. I have come very short of that actual communion with  
 ‘ God by meditation and ejaculation that I wish for.’

Monday, June 28.—‘ Sloth and business have prevented me  
 ‘ the days past from continuing my journal, but I am sensible of  
 ‘ the want of it. I cannot walk closely with God without daily  
 ‘ watchfulness and examination. Yesterday’s sermon related to  
 ‘ a sense of the sinfulness of sin, as the great principle on which  
 ‘ conversion stands contradistinguished from servile fear. I cannot  
 ‘ be so clear as I wish on this point.—In private exercises I  
 ‘ find a desire to serve God, and wish to see him glorified : but  
 ‘ my heart I find exceedingly selfish in the world.—This day, on  
 ‘ the road to ——, I enjoyed useful meditation two hours ;  
 ‘ my heart much drawn up to God, and approving his service

‘and presence: but in the remainder of my journey I was confused, and sometimes found myself carried away by carnal fears and proud reasonings. I resolved to be silent in the company I was to meet, if I might not be serviceable; and have found this evening the need and difficulty of being so; God grant me the spirit of meekness and charity!’

Wednesday, June 30.—‘I find it exceeding difficult to hold communion with God, when not more immediately engaged in ministerial duties. Conversation this day has been rather about religion than religious. I want more of Christ’s temper of meekness, having reason to suspect myself too solicitous when blamed unjustly. I see how vain it is to think of gaining Christ without forsaking all. Lord, make me more and more dead to the world!’

Monday, July 5.—‘I was striving much in prayer last night and this morning for a sense of the sinfulness of sin. My heart seems to have been quickened by it through the day, to keep a little close with God; yet how often have I forgotten him! O that I could love him more! I have been kept pretty much from fear respecting an approaching trial, being possessed with desire of professing Christ, with some confidence in his protection, and with compassion toward gainsayers. I have seen this day how needful it is to watch against a party spirit, and to love all that love Christ, leaving them to their own opinions, and to avoid love-destroying debates. I was rather affected than piously devout in the prayers at a funeral.—I ought to guard against a sort of desponding thoughts from external circumstances; and from carnal proud reasonings in my own heart.’

Wednesday, July 7.—‘Frame disordered at walking, though otherwise when I lay down. My comfort is, my salvation depends not on me, but Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, though I am so changeable.—Do I choose God for my portion? If so, why do I forget him so often, and think of him so coldly?’

Monday, July 26.—‘On reflection, I see my safest way is sitting down and abiding in the place I am called to. When absent from it, though in the way of duty, I do not so well retain the possession of my own mind.—This day I observed at waking, as

‘ I have often done, that the application of my heart to think on  
 ‘ God was rather by force, it was not easy to keep him in view,  
 ‘ though I had so many causes of thankfulness.—I have been en-  
 ‘ gaged all this day in some needful service ; yet find myself apt  
 ‘ to seek my own pleasure even in doing God’s work. I ought to  
 ‘ be more sensible of the importance of my office, and to depend  
 ‘ upon and pray more earnestly for the influences of God’s Spirit  
 ‘ on myself and labours. To be humble in the sense of my vile-  
 ‘ ness, and to believe the sufficiency of Christ, I find the two  
 ‘ hardest things I have to attain.’

Tuesday, August 10.—‘ This is club-day. I have not found  
 ‘ such desire after it as formerly. This is a great fault. I am  
 ‘ not thankful as I ought for such friends and opportunities ; nor  
 ‘ do I meet them with suitable desires of receiving and communi-  
 ‘ cating good. I should regard the club as a distinguished bless-  
 ‘ ing, and as laying me under peculiar obligations ; and be conti-  
 ‘ nually influenced by the expectations which the world has from  
 ‘ us. God has removed some outward trials I have been under ;  
 ‘ yet I would remember that Christ is our peace.’

Wednesday, August 11.—‘ Apt to wander in family prayer.  
 ‘ My state is of very low advancement ; more especially this ap-  
 ‘ pears by the infrequent applications of my heart to God ; a true  
 ‘ spirituality of temper I suspect I need for this reason ; and that  
 ‘ suspicion demands my strictest inquiry.—Last week, when in  
 ‘ trials, I seem to have been better than this, when out of them :  
 ‘ let me inquire whether I am driven to Christ by necessity or  
 ‘ drawn by love ?’

Monday, August 23.—‘ The devotions of this morning were  
 ‘ shortened by the expectation of business. Somewhat like this  
 ‘ often happens, and demands my greater attention.—Great ex-  
 ‘ perience this day of a corrupted heart ; though not signally over-  
 ‘ come, yet not watchful as I ought.’

Tuesday, August 24.—‘ Public duty encroached on the morn-  
 ‘ ing’s private exercise.—Had this day for some hours a peculiar  
 ‘ fear of falling away : I observed the actings of faith were weak ;  
 ‘ yet could not get them lively : seemed however determined for  
 ‘ God in Christ.—I am certainly influenced by a principle which  
 ‘ makes me not unwatchful against sin, and not altogether un-

‘ ready to duty : but is it from the right motive, faith working by love ?—Greatly wanting in thankfulness.’

June 6, 1757.—‘ I am well satisfied the desire of esteem, or fear of men, hath too much influence on my conduct. Lord, turn the fear of men’s faces into a love of their souls !’

We now come to finish this account of Mr. Walker’s life and ministry by shewing his behaviour during his last illness, and what support he found from religion, while in the near views of approaching death. This, it will be confessed on all hands, is a scene in which the truth and sincerity of a man’s religion is put to the test. To disarm the king of terrors of every appearance of horror, and to welcome his summons as a call from a vain and miserable world to a world of endless and unspeakable felicity, is the sole property of a firm faith in the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Now, as our Author perceived his soul to be greatly strengthened and established in grace, the nearer he advanced towards eternity, so will the attestation of this matter of fact, which was ground of comfort to himself, be to others a special confirmation of the truths he maintained, when they are assured that under the influence of them he finished his days in peace, and committed his soul and body into the hands of God, without the least doubt of being received into an happy immortality.

After the 27th of April in the year 1760, as was before observed, Mr. Walker was disabled from performing any further service in the public congregation. At this time he was seized with a fever, which confined him several weeks to his room at Truro : when he had in some degree recovered his strength after the abatement of the fever, a cough still hung upon him, for which, as it foreboded a consumption, he was ordered to Bristol for the use of the waters in the month of August. Having stayed two months there with little or no benefit, he went in the autumn to Kington in Warwickshire, with an intention of spending some time with the Rev. Mr. Talbot, Vicar of that parish ; but, a bad season of the year coming on, he was ordered back to the Bristol wells.



There he continued till the middle of December, when it was judged proper that he should be removed to some dry healthy spot in the neighbourhood of London, where he could enjoy the benefit of a good air. Upon this, having before been invited by the Earl of Dartmouth to try the air at Blackheath, he went thither a few days before Christmas. Being situated in a place so near London, he had an opportunity of having the best advice, but it was not in the power of medicine to stop the progress of his disease. It is worthy our notice to observe how remarkably the Providence of God raised up friends to supply his several wants throughout his illness. After resigning the Vicarage of Talland, the curacy of Truro was the whole of his income. The pay was but small, and his expenses were necessarily increased to a great degree by a long-continued sickness. But he had resigned himself into the hands of God, and found the promise verified that he never will \* forsake those who committed themselves to the care of his fatherly protection. Being in the house of the Earl and Countess of Dartmouth, he had all the assistance that his critical situation could require. Presents also were conveyed to him from his friends at Truro, and at other places, whose love to him was such, that they were ready to have furnished him with whatever supplies of money he might have stood in need of. And to the honour of those gentlemen of the faculty who were consulted it must be recorded, that as soon as they were severally apprized of the circumstances of their patient, they not only gave their attendance gratis, but seemed to take delight in offering him their service.

It appeared to be ordered by a peculiar appointment of divine Providence that Mr. Walker, after he had finished his ministry at Truro, should abide a considerable time in the large and populous city of Bristol, and that he should afterwards spend the last seven months of his life in the neighbourhood of the great metropolis. Several serious persons, both of the Clergy and Laity, in and about London and Bristol, visited him frequently in his illness, to whom his conversation was blessed in a very singular manner. By his knowledge and experience he was eminently

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\* Psalm xxxvii. 25. Matt. vi. 33.

qualified to lead others to an acquaintance with their own hearts, and to the discovery of the comforts and privileges of the Gospel, as well as to instruct Ministers in the faithful discharge of their important office; so that, when bodily weakness prevented him from preaching any more in public, by his talent in conversing, in which he remarkably excelled, he was made instrumental in promoting the glory of God, and the good of many souls. He continued to the very last, whenever his strength would enable him to speak, to give suitable exhortations to those that were about him.

With regard to his own experiences in this last and languid season of his life, of which he frequently spake to those about him, he complained in general of great deadness of spiritual affections, and of the absence of all sensible impressions of joy and delight in the contemplation of the exceeding love of God towards him, and of his approaching happy change. As he disavowed in principle any dependence upon religious frames, as a recommendation to God's favour, thinking it a scheme which savours too much of self-righteousness, and had learnt to cast his whole confidence upon the promises of God freely offered in the Gospel of Christ to sinners convinced of their guilt and helplessness; so he was quite contented and easy in his mind under the want of those sensations. But it is reasonable to suppose that the coldness and deadness of his affections were in a great measure, if not wholly, owing to the extreme weak state of his body. An inward burning fever, attended with profuse night-sweats, had wasted his vital strength; a stubborn cough continually hung upon him; neither his food nor his medicines did him any service; a general languor oppressed his whole frame, and his spirits were reduced to a very low state. At those times, when the powers of nature failed him most, he was wont to break out into such expressions as these; "What a miserable creature should I be in  
" my present situation, if I could not look upon God as my co-  
" venant-God, my reconciled Father in Christ? The weakness  
" of my body and of my spirits deprives me of all joyous sensa-  
" tions; but my faith in God's promises, I bless the Lord, is  
" firm and unshaken. What though my loss of strength and  
" spirits robs me of all comfortable communion with God, the

“ promises are not therefore made void. Abraham believed, and it was counted to him for righteousness. I believe that God is faithful and true in all his declarations of mercy, which I have sought for, though I cannot now feel the impressions of his love.”

Upon several occasions he was heard to say, “ I bless God that upon the closest review of my life, for these ten years past, I can see evident marks of my having lived with a single eye to the glory of God, in opposition to the selfishness of my nature.”

And likewise,

“ The nearer I advance towards eternity, the more I am confirmed in the truth of the doctrines which I have preached and published. I am sure they will stand the test of the last day. Conviction of sin, original as well as actual, is the grand inlet to all saving knowledge ; where this is wanting, the superstructure will not stand ; but if this foundation be deeply laid, the heart will then welcome the glad tidings of salvation.”

Upon the whole we may observe, that under a continued absence of all sensible comfort he possessed his soul in the most settled, abiding, solid peace, never admitting the least doubt of his acceptance with God.

Nothing was more remarkable in him than the constant, even, and undisturbed tranquillity which he maintained under the frequent changes that attended his disorder. It sometimes happened that upon an alteration of his medicines there appeared hope of his recovery: at such times he was observed to take delight in the prospect of returning to the exercise of his ministry among his people at Truro, of whom he never spake without evident tokens of singular pleasure and satisfaction in them ; sometimes not without tears of affection, and tender concern for the welfare of their souls. When these short-lived hopes were vanished, and the dangerous symptoms of his disorder returned, no alteration appeared in the frame of his mind : he only turned his views to the awful scene that called for his more immediate attention, and spake with equal delight of the joys reserved beyond the grave for the faithful servants of the living God. It never could be discovered that he desired to live, or wished to die. His soul was all submission to the will of his heavenly Father, and his whole con-

cern seemed to be, to preserve that temper of mind, wherein he might have said with St. Paul, None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord, and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore or die, we are the Lord's.

His patience was not worn out, but strengthened and increased, by the continuation and increase of his sufferings. If at any time, which seldom happened, an expression had escaped his lips, that seemed to savour of fretfulness or impatience, he was observed to check and reprove himself; at the last, indeed, Patience appeared to have had her perfect work; for nothing of this kind was discovered in him for some time before his death.

What he endured within the last six weeks from an inward parching heat is almost inexpressible. His only apprehensions under these trying circumstances were lest his patience should not hold out, and that he should wish for a release sooner than God should see fit to grant it. But the Lord was pleased to preserve in him a spirit of resignation to the last.

To this view of his behaviour in this his last scene I shall sub-join two letters, written by him to his nearest and most intimate friend at Truro. The former is dated fifteen days, the latter but five, before his death.

‘ My dearest, most faithful Friend,

‘ My disorder, though by no means affording to myself the  
 ‘ least prospect of recovery, yet seems to affect me at present more  
 ‘ with weakness, than with that violent heat, which rendered me  
 ‘ incapable of all thought. I can now, blessed be God! think a  
 ‘ little; and with what comfort do I both receive your thoughts,  
 ‘ and communicate mine to you! O! my dear friend, what do  
 ‘ we owe to the Lord for one another! more than I could have con-  
 ‘ ceived, had not God sent me to die elsewhere. We shall have  
 ‘ time to praise the Lord when we meet in the other world. I  
 ‘ stand and look upon that blessed world with an established  
 ‘ heart: I see the way prepared, opened, and assured to me in  
 ‘ Jesus Christ: and for ever blessed be the name of God, that I  
 ‘ can look upon death, that introduces that glorious scene, with-  
 ‘ out any kind of fear. I find my grand duty still is submission as

‘ to time and circumstances. Why should not I say to you, that  
 ‘ I find nothing come so near my heart as the fear lest my will  
 ‘ should thwart God’s in any circumstances? here I think I am  
 ‘ enabled to watch and pray in some poor measure. Well, my  
 ‘ dear friend, I am but stepping a little before you. You will  
 ‘ soon also get your release, and there we shall triumph for ever  
 ‘ in the name, and love, and power of the Lamb. Adieu! Yours  
 ‘ in the Lord Jesus Christ for ever. Amen.

‘ S. W.’

‘ *Blackheath, July 4, 1761.*’

‘ My dearest Friend,

‘ With great confusion of thought, I have no doubts, great  
 ‘ confidence, great submission, no complaining.

‘ The great thing which I always feared is, I believe, coming  
 ‘ upon me; that I am coming into a diarrhœa, confined to my  
 ‘ bed, and have no strength.

‘ As to actual views of the joys that are coming, I have none;  
 ‘ but a steadfast belief of them in Christ.

‘ What I have found in myself for months, both as to the re-  
 ‘ view of time past, and the present workings of the Spirit, has  
 ‘ left me without all doubt of my union with Christ, &c.

‘ S. W.’

‘ *Blackheath, July 14, 1761.*’

On the Tuesday morning he dictated the above letter, for at that time he was not able to hold a pen in his hand. A few hours after the symptoms of his approaching dissolution begun to shew themselves, his throat rattled, a cold clammy sweat ran down his cheeks, and the muscles of his arms and face appeared to be convulsed with frequent spasms and contractions. His heart, to use his own expression, seemed to him to be tied round with thongs. He still spake of these presages of his death with the utmost calmness and composure, and begged of his friends about him that they would pray for him, that he might hold out with patience unto the end. It being observed by one of them sitting on his bedside what a blessing he enjoyed in his present situation, that his soul was ripe for heaven and eternity, he inter-

rupted him with saying, "That the body of sin was not yet done away, but that he should continue a sinner to the last gasp, and desired that he would pray for him as such." Thus lowly and humbly did he think of himself, even under all his attainments in grace. In this lingering manner he continued the five or six last days without any other visible alteration in his body than gradually growing weaker.

But, notwithstanding all his former deadness and dryness of soul which he complained of, it pleased God to shed abroad in his heart a lively sense of his love and favour, and a strong foretaste of heavenly joy before he took him to the enjoyment of himself. On the Thursday, starting up from an apparent fit of dozing, he took hold of his nurse by the hand, who was sitting near him, and uttered this rapturous expression; "I have been upon the wings of the cherubin; heaven has in a manner been opened to me; I shall be soon there myself, and am only sorry that I cannot take you with me." The next day, while a young Clergyman, who came from a distant part of the country to visit his departing friend, was standing near his bedside, he lifted up his eyes in a manner that bespoke a joy more than words could utter, and addressed him thus, "O! my friend, had I strength to speak, I could tell you such news as would rejoice your very soul: I have had such views of heaven!—But I am not able to say more."

On the Saturday his voice faltered exceedingly, and his head seemed rather to ramble. We scarce imagined he could have lived out the day; and indeed, had he not been a remarkably strong-made man, it is not conceivable that he could have supported it so long under so severe and fatiguing an illness. He passed the night however in extreme weakness; and about nine o'clock the next morning it pleased God to release him from all his sufferings.

The evident concern of some of his particular friends, upon the increase of his disorder, sometimes affected him; on which account, thinking, it is probable, that the sight of his last agonies might give them pain, he one day said to a servant that attended him, "I would I might slip away, when nobody but you should be present;" and so indeed it fell out, for just when all except that person had left the room, not apprehending him to be so

very near his end, he turned his head aside on the pillow, and nature appearing to be quite exhausted, without any other token than a sigh something longer and more deep than usual, his soul was delivered from the prison of the body.

He departed this life in a lodging-house at Blackheath, to which he had been removed a few weeks before, on Sunday, July 19, 1761, in the forty-eighth year of his age, and entered upon his sabbath of eternal rest.

It was his particular direction that his body should be interred in the church-yard of the parish in which he died. In compliance therewith he was buried in the church-yard of Lewisham, in the county of Kent.

From the foregoing account the attentive reader may draw the two following reflections:—

*First.*—That a life of conformity to the Gospel of Jesus Christ is not what some, in excuse for their own coldness and negligence, represent it to be: they endeavour to persuade themselves and others that it is an impracticable plan, and inconsistent with many of the most reasonable and necessary employments. If such persons would fairly attend to the motions of their own minds, they would probably find that the true ground of their objection is the fear of singularity, the dread of being thought weak enough to be led away by the craft of men who lie in wait to deceive, not considering that at the very same time they are manifestly enslaved to popular opinion, and want the courage to think for themselves.

*Secondly.*—That a life of conformity to Gospel principles is the pleasantest life that can be led upon earth: it would be difficult indeed to convey an exact idea of its peculiar joys and delights to those who neither have nor desire to have any experience of them; but all who know what it is to love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, know that our blessed Master does not now leave his disciples comfortless, nor require any service from them but what is itself the most perfect freedom. If true happiness consists in solid tranquillity and peace of mind, they only can enjoy it whose hearts and lives are unfeignedly devoted to God. Great peace have they that love thy law, saith the Psalmist. Peace I leave

with you, my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth give I unto you, saith the Saviour: but, alas! there is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked. The proud, whom God resisteth; the covetous, whom God abhorreth; the envious, the uncharitable, the careless, and self-confident, the unthankful and unholy, all in general that know not God, and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, will probably find, when the trying hour of dissolution comes, if they do not experience it already, that they are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt: it was not so with him of whom we have been speaking; he was calm and undisturbed under various affecting trials, and, when death approached, rejoiced in hope of the glory of God.

To conclude; if there be any among my readers who cruelly, disdainfully, and despitefully speak against the righteous, who have wantonly or maliciously contributed to load with disgrace and contempt this or any other of the faithful Ministers or serious followers of the blessed Jesus; if there be any, who, being led away by the error of the wicked, take pleasure in deriding those that pass the time of their sojourning here in fear, and consider this world as a dangerous wilderness that lies in their way to a land of rest and peace, wherein an everlasting inheritance is provided for them; let me entreat such persons to reflect that a day is coming when the understandings of men shall be freed from mistake and misapprehension, and all things shall appear in their true light. Then, to use the words of a pious Author, shall the righteous man stand in great boldness before the face of such as have afflicted him, and made no account of his labours. When they see it they shall be troubled with terrible fear, and shall be amazed at the strangeness of his salvation, so far beyond all that they looked for. And they, repenting and groaning for anguish of spirit, shall say within themselves, This was he whom we had sometimes in derision, and a proverb of reproach. We fools accounted his life madness, and his end to be without honour. How is he numbered among the children of God, and his lot is among the saints! Therefore have we erred from the way of truth, &c. \*

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\* Wisdom of Solomon, v. 1, &c.



Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law doth he meditate day and night \*. May this blessing be the happy portion of all into whose hands these sheets may come ! may the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who can work by the weakest and most unworthy of his servants, vouchsafe to make them instrumental to promote his glory and the good of immortal souls ! May every one that shall read the following Discourses be led into the knowledge and love of those enlivening truths, which animated our Author both in life and at death, and filled him with a well-grounded hope of everlasting salvation ! May the law of God, inwardly applied to his soul, beget in him a deep conviction of sin, and lead him, as a schoolmaster, unto Christ the Saviour ; that, being justified by faith, he may have peace with God, bring forth fruit unto holiness, and in the end obtain everlasting life ! Amen.

*Oxford, June 15, 1763.*

J. S.

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\* Psalm i. 1, 2.



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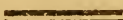
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# S E R M O N I.



## LECTURES

### ON THE CHURCH CATECHISM.



ACTS xvi. 30.

*What must I do to be saved?*



THE importance of the inquiry suggested in these words is undeniable. The person that spoke them was the jailer, who, being duly affected with the miraculous power and presence of God (which shook the foundations of the prison in which Paul and Silas were confined), was brought to a deep concern about the condition of his soul, which drew from him this importunate question, *What must I do to be saved?* It would be absurd to imagine the inquiry does not as well become us as him. It were well if every soul of us were brought to make it with his earnestness and purpose of heart. But, however that be, to give a full answer to it will not be amiss. It may, by the blessing of God, beget that concern upon the hearts of those who continue insensible in their sins, which

their unhappy case most loudly calls for; while at the same time it will direct those who are seeking eternal life into a more perfect knowledge of the way of salvation.

My design is to attempt the resolution of this interesting matter, in an explication of our Church Catechism, during the Sunday afternoons of this summer\*. And I am confident, if due attendance and attention be given hereto, one of you will think the matters contained in this little summary to have been so easy to be understood as not to need thought and explanation, nor of so small importance as not to deserve it.

It will be proper to introduce the explanation intended by this general remark on the design of the Catechism; which, properly conceived, will serve as a key to open to us what is contained in it; namely, “that this Catechism does, as all other Christian Catechisms must do, relate entirely to the religion of fallen lost man.” The matter this Catechism explains is not what as gracious persons we must do to keep God’s favour, but what as sinners must be done in us and by us to obtain it: not simply what, as in a state of integrity, we must do to be happy, but what, as in a state of ruin, we must do to be saved. If you think it contains an account of the religion of works, you are altogether beside the matter, cannot understand one syllable it says, and, how-

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\* These sermons were preached at Truro, in Cornwall, in the year 1759.



ever you may have a certain kind of knowledge respecting the Christian doctrines herein set before you, yet you have still all to learn as to the salvation of your soul in the belief of them. I beseech you, therefore, beware you do not stumble at the threshold, and, by imagining you must be saved by your own doings, upset the covenant of grace (which is no longer such, if our merits are set up as the cause of our acceptance with God), and so render the redemption that is in Christ quite a needless thing; and, what may not be at first thought of, not only faith, but also repentance, the sacraments, and, in short, all means of grace, absolutely impertinent. The Catechism supposes you to be an apostate creature, and, as such, undone and helpless, incapable in yourself of recovering God's favour, or of returning to him. It proceeds entirely on this supposition, that you are in a fallen state, explaining to you the method which the mercy of God hath provided for your remedy, how you are called to it, and by what means you may be made effectually a partaker of it. Now, this being laid down, I proceed to observe from it, for the better understanding of the Church Catechism,

I.—That it is a summary of that whole salvation for fallen creatures, which is in the Redeemer Jesus Christ. Every part of it has the most direct eye to him, as the all in all of lost fallen man. The baptismal covenant is entirely founded in his merits; the baptismal renunciation stands upon his kingdom and grace; the Christian faith points him out to us as the Author of all our pardon, acceptance, and fellow-

ship with God in time and eternity ; the law in the ten commandments sets him before us as our righteousness, and the Procurer of that grace, by which we are restored to that image of God and conformity to his blessed nature and will, which is the substance of the law ; prayer, finally, and the sacraments, which are the means of our access unto God as our Father, and of our receiving from him the full assurance of his love and favour, with all needful supplies of his Spirit ; these are no otherwise acceptable to God, or profitable to us, but in the faith of Jesus Christ, and through his mediation. Christ then is the sum of this Catechism, even *Christ of God made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.* Wretched expositors therefore of this Catechism are they, who, by passing over lightly the fall of man, by failing to explain the deep apostacy of our nature, and therein our absolute guilt and insufficiency to all good (artfully, wickedly, and with the most barefaced disingenuity, either saying nothing about them at all, or what only might serve to make people think these were points of uncertainty and of no moment), have knowingly and wilfully overturned the design which the reformers had in the Catechism ; hid from men's eyes those doctrines which the true church of England thinks to be essentially necessary to salvation ; and effectually struck Christ out of the whole of it, as to his being the righteousness and strength, the now living Head, and the future glorious reward of his people.

II.—I take notice further, for the better knowledge

of what is to be expected in the Catechism, that it not only goes upon the supposition of our being fallen, lost, helpless creatures, and of redemption wrought out by Jesus Christ, as the only means of recovery; but, supposing also that we own the one and the other, it does only explain how it is that we lost creatures are called to this salvation, and upon what condition it is made effectually ours. It supposes you to be in a lost state by nature, explains to you what that lost state is, and, taking it for granted you would be glad to be delivered out of it, and that there is but one way whereby you can be so, namely, by Jesus Christ, opens to you very fully what that salvation is, and what, as a Christian, lies on your part, that you may have the whole benefit of it. You are not, therefore, to look here for any proofs of your “being by nature born in sin, and a child of wrath;” it tells you, upon God’s authority, that you are so, and supposes you sensible of it; nor does it go about to convince you by arguments, that *there is no other name under heaven whereby you must be saved*, but only the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; that, as an instruction provided in the visible church professing the name of Christ, it sets forth as a truth not to be questioned. It is simply an instruction for lost sinners in the way of salvation that is in Jesus Christ; and whoever doth not know himself a fallen lost creature, and desire salvation by Christ Jesus only, can get no saving good from it.—I observe further, for the better understanding the scope of the Catechism,

III.—That it sets forth faith as the means of our

being made effectually partakers of the salvation that is in Christ, namely, that true faith, which engages to a renunciation and forsaking of all the ways of sin, and is a principle of obedience to God's holy will and commandments, and actually enables to the one and the other of these, by the grace of God waited for and given in the use of prayer and the sacraments. And further, that it also sets out baptism as the first sealing ordinance, confirming all the promises of God unto us upon such our faith, and giving us what may perhaps be called a charter-title, which will have obligatory force when we do so believe, and, in the mean time, calls upon us to do so. This is the substance of the Church Catechism, and may shew you the general plan upon which it is drawn up, namely, that since we are fallen and lost creatures, and God has prepared salvation for us in Jesus Christ, the only way we can have that salvation effectually ours is by a true faith begotten in us by the Holy Spirit, powerful to the mortification of sin, and enabling us to live unto God. This is the Christian covenant sealed by baptism, and this view of it accounts for the several parts of the Church Catechism; namely,

1.—The union of true believers with Christ, and therein their adoption to be God's children in this life, and title to an inheritance in the kingdom of heaven hereafter.

2.—The baptismal vow, which is a solemn profession of faith in God through Jesus Christ wrought by the operation of the Holy Ghost; of their renouncing the devil, the world, and the flesh; and of

their obligation and purpose to keep God's holy will and commandments, and to walk in the same all the days of their life.

3.—Prayer and the sacraments; the former, for confirming this faith in us; the latter, for assuring to us the promises of God in Christ upon such our faith, as also for building us up therein. In these three things lies the whole substance of the Catechism: whereby you see that the merit of Christ is the cause of all hope towards, and acceptance with, God; and faith in him the only way or means of our being made partakers thereof.

Having now ascertained the scheme upon which the Catechism of the church of England is planned, I come to speak of the first part of it above mentioned, the privileges sealed to believers in baptism; namely, they are therein made, in a covenant-way, “members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven.” These privileges are sealed to believers in baptism: and, if only to believers, how then are they said to belong to infants who are incapable of faith, while, nevertheless, children are taught to say, that in their baptism they were made members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven? We allow the baptizing of infants, because we judge we have God's warrant and command for it; and inasmuch as the children of parents professing themselves Christians are relatively and federally a holy seed (the promise evidently and expressly reaching unto them as well as their parents); inasmuch as by baptism they are made

members of the visible church, and have a right to all the external privileges of the church equally with any others ; and inasmuch as also, when they are brought to baptism, they do make profession of the true faith by their proxies ; therefore here, as well as in the office for baptizing infants, they are spoken of, in common with all others who have partaken of baptism, as believers and regenerate, and, consequently, as having a sealed right in all the blessings of the covenant of grace : I say, for these reasons they are spoken of as true believers and regenerate persons ; not that they actually are so, or indeed can be, till the gift of God, namely, faith, by the operation of the Holy Ghost, through the hearing of the word, shall be granted unto them ; when (and not before, though baptized) they are effectually made living members of Christ, children of God, and heirs of heaven ; and when their baptism comes to have its full force, sealing and confirming to them all the blessings of the Gospel as theirs in the most absolute and complete manner. Yet, in the mean time, since infants, children of Christian parents, have by birth a title to Christian privileges, so far forth as their case requires, and since by their baptism they are admitted into the number of God's professing people, therefore, though by their baptism they may not be said to have these privileges, in a covenant-way, sealed to them as theirs in the proper power and influence of that initiating seal ; yet thereby they have what, for distinction-sake, I may be allowed to call a charter-title to them ; their name is by baptism put into

the charter-grant of Christian privileges, which they may plead, as fully engaging a gracious and faithful God to them, whenever they attain unto true faith. Now such their charter-right to the great blessings of being made, in this way, by baptism, members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven, they are here put in mind of; and that with this design, that being sensible of the greatness of these blessings, and of the right they have in them, if they make use of it, they may be immediately stirred up to do so.—And in order to their being moved hereunto as they grow in years, it is first the duty of parents, sponsors, and ministers, to explain to them, and, secondly, of the young persons themselves to consider, the importance of these Gospel blessings, and the right they have in them, to the end that by a true faith, fruitful of Gospel holiness, they may be brought by the grace of God to make out their claim to them as good and effectual.

*First.*—It is the duty of parents, sponsors, and ministers, to explain unto children, as they become capable of understanding them, the great importance of these Gospel privileges, and the right they have in them, in order to move them unto the making out their claim and right by true faith and repentance. It is a justice we owe to Christ, to our little ones, to our own souls, that we should take every measure for instructing them in, and for recommending to them, the excellency of these blessings. The incomparable value we set upon them ourselves, evident

before our children in the influence they have on our whole conduct, should teach them; and our carefulness in taking every opportunity of opening to them the sense and force of these riches of Christ, should be perpetually exciting them to make their interest in them sure. Whether parents, sureties, or ministers (and indeed the same may be said of the whole church), we should be by conduct and instruction explaining and recommending to them what a glorious thing it is to be a member of Christ, joined to the Son of God the Saviour, the only Saviour of the world, in whom there is all we can want or wish, all the treasures of pardon, grace, and glory; a child of God; no longer a child of wrath, an outcast from the divine favour, an object of God's displeasure, but a child of the high and living God, a child whom he loves with that infinite tenderness which is peculiar to himself; a child whom he does and will care for; whom he loves to keep in his everlasting arms, and delights to have continually in his sight; an *inheritor of the kingdom of heaven*; a child, and therefore an heir, no longer an heir of hell, as once when he was not in Christ, but now an heir of the everlasting kingdom of heaven; an heir, growing up to the possession of his inheritance every day; an heir, who shall shortly be in his Father's house and family, past death, past sin, past sorrow, happy, blessed, glorious for ever and ever. I say, it is our duty to explain and recommend these glorious things to our little ones, and by all possible means to stir them



up unto the suing for that faith, by means of which, great as these blessings are, they shall be made effectually theirs.

*Secondly.*—It is the duty of all young persons, who are called to these important blessings, seriously to lay them to heart, as they become capable of doing so; and continually to pray unto God to give them grace, that by a true faith their title in them may be made good and effectual. Dear children, I beseech you, endeavour to be sensible yourselves how great these blessings are, and how much you need them. Do not you know that you are by nature born in sin and children of wrath? Can you think any thing in the whole world so terrible as that natural state of yours? And will ye be willing to continue in it? What! are ye willing that God shall be angry with you all the while you live, and, when you die, cast you into the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone? God forbid this should be your case. No; there are better things prepared for you. God has sent his only-begotten Son from heaven to save you from this state of sin and wrath. And God hath called you to partake of all this salvation, and given you, as it were under his hand, a right to it, if ye use that right. And will ye not use it? O, my dear children, what a blessed thing will it be for you to have Christ for your Christ! O, if ye once have but Christ for your Christ, ye need fear nothing! Only get Christ, and ye will fear nothing. Ye will not fear the devil, though he be the roaring lion, that

walketh about seeking to devour you. Ye will not fear death, which every body else is afraid of. And then ye will not fear thunder nor lightning, nor any other thing ye are now so much afraid of. No; if ye have Christ once, ye will fear nothing: for then God will be your Father. And you know God is able to do for you, for he made every thing. And if he be your Father, then to be sure he loves you; yes, a great deal more than your own father and mother, and he will do every thing for you, and will not suffer you to be hurt by any thing. And do not you know that God never dies, though you do? He will be alive when you are dead; and, if you belong to Christ, he will give you a far better world than this is; pleasures a great deal better than any you can have here; and every thing better, without comparison. Why, heaven will be yours. O, I am thinking how happy ye will be when ye get to heaven! There ye will be like the angels of God; there ye will be glorified saints; there ye will stand at the right hand of God; (and who then shall be able to hurt you?) there ye will be singing praises to God, with thousands of thousands of saints and angels; there ye will not die any more, nor be sick any more, nor be afraid of any thing any more. And how long will ye be there? Not for a little while, but for ever. O, how happy will ye be when ye get to heaven! Now, therefore, think of these things, my dear children. Do not let the love of play and pleasure make you forget them. Christ is far better for you than all the

pleasure and all the play, nay, than all the fine clothes, and all the fine sights, and all the fine things in the world together.

Think of these things, and be sure you pray to God every day to make you mind them, and make you love them. The devil wants to have you, and he will be trying all he can to make you forget them; but God is stronger than the devil; and if you pray unto him, he will make you remember them, and will put them into your hearts, and will by his Holy Spirit make you, who are by nature born in sin and the children of wrath, members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven.

## S E R M O N II.

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ACTS xvi. 30.

*What must I do to be saved?*

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IN and by baptism believers have sealed to them a covenant-right in the glorious privileges of membership in Christ, adoption into God's family as children, and inheritance in the kingdom of heaven. And baptism, which does thus, in a covenant-way, seal these privileges to believers, does, in what was called a charter-way, seal them to baptized infants, so that it lies upon themselves, coming to years, to make out their claim to these things by a true faith wrought in them by the spirit of God. Accordingly, the *Question* immediately following is, "What did your godfathers and godmothers then for you?" that is, in your name, as representing you, and acting for you.

*Answer.*—"They did promise and vow three things in my name: *First*, That I should renounce the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh. *Secondly*, That I should believe all the articles of the Christian faith. And, *Thirdly*, That I should keep God's holy will and commandments,

“ and walk in the same all the days of my life.” All this (which in fewer words is but truly to believe, to wit, by that divine faith, in the power of which we die unto sin and live unto God) they promised and vowed, not as what I was *then* to do, for I was at that time incapable, but what I should *hereafter* do when I grew up to years of discretion, and live in the practice of all my days. And I am perfectly satisfied, that, if I do this, I am indeed a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven; my baptism, in that case, being God’s seal of indenture, as it were, and obligation, whereby he conveys and makes over to me, in full right, all these blessings, engaging himself, by contract and covenant thus sealed and executed, to make them good to me. But I know also, that, if I do not this which they promised and vowed for me, and until I do it, these blessings are not mine; neither had my baptism at the time, simply and of itself, force effectually to make and seal me member of Christ, child of God, and inheritor of the kingdom of heaven. So that I see my having a real right in these things, and my being able to look upon them as mine, in virtue of my baptism conveying and sealing them to me, doth depend upon my believing and doing this which my godfathers and godmothers promised for me. The *Question* therefore coming next after is, “ Dost thou “ not think that thou art bound to believe and to do “ what thy godfathers and godmothers promised for “ thee?” The *Answer* to which is; “ Yes, verily,

“ and by God’s help so I will. And I heartily thank  
“ our heavenly Father, that he hath called me to this  
“ state of salvation, through Jesus Christ our Sa-  
“ viour. And I pray unto God to give me his grace,  
“ that I may continue in the same unto my life’s  
“ end.” Having proceeded thus far in the recital of  
the Catechism, it may be advisable to speak to this  
latter question and answer here, both that we may  
have before us a general account of what we are to  
expect in the baptismal vow, as well as that, in the  
particular explanation thereof, the creed and com-  
mandments may appear the more clearly to be but  
parts of it, being proceeded to without interruption  
immediately after that the renunciation of the devil,  
world, and flesh, shall have been opened; and also,  
that the obligation to baptismal engagements (being  
considered immediately after baptismal benefits, and  
seen as absolutely necessary to be performed, in order  
to a real and saving right in such blessings) may be  
stated in its full force, and be brought with its proper  
power upon the mind.

Now, in the *Question* and *Answer* before us, I ob-  
serve,

I.—That the person questioned is supposed to be  
instructed in the nature of Gospel blessings, and his  
own want of them: for he speaks of a state of salva-  
tion through Jesus Christ the Saviour; and expresses  
his hearty thankfulness, that he himself is called to  
it. Neither of which he could properly do, unless he  
knew what a sinful, guilty, undone, helpless creature

he is by nature ; and that in Jesus Christ there is a free and full salvation provided for him, reaching to his every need in this life and the future.

II.—I observe, also, that the party questioned is supposed to be instructed in, and acquainted with, the nature and meaning of the baptismal vow, as corresponding to that salvation. He is supposed to know this ; that he is not called upon to believe and do the things contained in the baptismal vow, only because God will have him so to believe and do, but also from the very nature of his fallen state ; because being by nature in a state of sin and death, as *guilty and helpless*, he must needs, if he will be saved, believe in God through Jesus Christ, seeing there is no other way but this of Christ wherein God is merciful to guilty sinners ; and God, for his own glory, has provided this way for their pardon and acceptance to his favour ; and because also being by nature under *the dominion of sin*, and estranged from God, in a miserable subjection to the devil, his liberty lies entirely in his renouncing the one, and turning to the other, through the grace offered him. And *that* he is here supposed to be instructed in and acquainted with. This is plain likewise from his thanking God that he hath called him to this state of salvation, and by his praying God to give him grace that he may continue in the same, believing and doing what his godfathers and godmothers promised for him ; which practice of faith and obedience is indeed being in a state of salvation in the very nature of the thing itself, as it is a present enjoyment of the salvation that is in

Christ, in an actual freedom from the guilt and power of sin — I observe,

III.—That in this *Question* and *Answer* the person questioned is further supposed to be instructed in, and acquainted with, the nature of baptism, as an instrument, by divine appointment, sealing all the blessings of this salvation to those who thus believe and do, and to those only, though baptized. He sees the blessing on one part, and the obligation on the other, both enclosed and sealed up together in the baptismal ordinance. He is satisfied, that as baptism seals Christ and all his benefits, so only to true believers; and therefore, where the condition is not wrought in the heart, and manifest in the life, there baptism has not its sealing force and power. Yet he is advised, that baptism does convey and assure Christ and all his benefits to all those who do believe with that faith which worketh obedience; such faith and obedience being, as it were, the present possession of salvation: and accordingly he heartily thanks God for having called him by his word and Spirit to this true faith, and thereby to a state of salvation, in which he regards and walks with God as his God in covenant, by virtue of baptism, and prays that he may have grace to continue in this state of salvation, living by faith, unto his life's end.

In these things the person questioned is here supposed to be instructed, as he is also supposed with full purpose of heart to acquiesce in them. Concerning which acquiescence of his he here makes the fullest and most peremptory declaration, saying, “ I



“ do verily think myself bound to believe and do  
“ those things which my godfathers and godmothers  
“ promised for me ;” ‘ not only because in my name,  
‘ as my representatives, they promised for my so  
‘ doing and believing, but because I see and know  
‘ my whole salvation depends hereon ; and because I  
‘ cordially approve, and sincerely value, this salvation,  
‘ in the whole of it, as most worthy of and honour-  
‘ able to God and to Jesus Christ my Saviour, as  
‘ well as being complete in its effects to myself. And  
‘ although I see and foresee that a constant succes-  
‘ sion of self-denials, reproaches, and sufferings, must  
‘ be my lot in this state of Christian salvation I am  
‘ called to, yet I am steadfastly determined, by the  
‘ help of God, thus to believe and do, as my bounden  
‘ duty is. Yea, and I am so far from being discour-  
‘ aged at the thought of what I have already or  
‘ may hereafter be obliged to forego, lose, or suffer,  
‘ in this state of salvation, that I heartily thank God,  
‘ for having called me (first in my baptism, when I  
‘ was an infant, wherein he graciously took me into  
‘ the number of his people, and since by his word  
‘ and Spirit begetting faith in me, and so making my  
‘ baptism of full force) to this state of salvation where-  
‘ in I stand : for such mercy of our heavenly Father  
‘ toward me, I am abundantly, above all things, and  
‘ in every case, thankful.—And there is but one thing  
‘ that I have henceforward to ask especially at his  
‘ hands, which is, that God will give me grace that,  
‘ by no treachery of my own heart, device of the  
‘ devil, or frowns or smiles from the world, I may be

‘ moved ; but that always, every where, and in every  
 ‘ thing, I may be kept continuing in the faith and  
 ‘ practice of a Christian, without wavering and with-  
 ‘ out drawing back, unto my life’s end.’

The sense of the passage is now fully before us ; and we may each of us seasonably make some inquiries into ourselves concerning it. For the matter before us is not the business of children, but that which we must be all found not only in the profession, but also in the practice of, as we hope to meet Christ with any courage or comfort at his second coming to judge the quick and the dead. Permit me therefore to ask every person in this assembly, now grown up to years of discretion,

*First.*—Whether you think yourself bound to believe and do what is contained in the baptismal vow ? Do you think your believing in Jesus Christ, renouncing sin, the world, and the devil, and walking after God’s will and commandments, to be the very business of your life ; and that you are really and actually bound to such a conduct by your baptismal profession ? It is true indeed these engagements were made for you when you knew nothing of the matter : but the question is, *now*, that you have your reason about you, do you think yourself obliged to stand by your Christian profession, and that declaration made thereof in baptism, or not ? If you say, “ No ; what  
 “ concern have I with engagements made without  
 “ my consent ? I do not think myself bound to these  
 “ things :” then you will take notice, that you do in fact disclaim your baptism, and, in consequence,

renounce Christianity, and all hope of salvation through Jesus Christ. You put yourself quite off the Gospel foundation, and determine to stand on your own bottom for everlasting life. But then, if these be your thoughts, how very inconsistent a part have you been acting, and how have you been trifling with God, as often as you have come into a Christian assembly, or approached unto the Lord's table? Since both the one and the other of these are, in the very nature of them, public acknowledgments of your judging and believing there is salvation in none other but Jesus Christ, and of your thinking yourselves obliged to die unto sin and live unto God, after the example of Christ's death and resurrection, and according to the rule of God's holy word.—But if you judge yourself bound to believe and to do these things contained in the baptismal vow, I ask,

*Secondly.*—Have you a steadfast will to do so? Can you say, from the bottom of your heart, as in the presence of Him who knows your secret thoughts, and as you hope to be saved, “I will do so by God's help. I have no objection to any thing here required of me to believe, renounce, or perform; it is my honest desire, God knows, to fulfil it all; and although I have no sufficiency of myself to perform the least part of it, yet I am resolutely determined upon performing the whole in the stated course of my life, by God's help?” Now let us beware, my dear brother, that while we are saying this, we have at the bottom no reserves. If you do not give God absolutely *all*, you give him nothing.

Are you therefore fully and wholly determined upon a life of faith in God as your present and eternal *all* through Jesus Christ, to be justified, accepted, and glorified, only in his own Gospel way, through the righteousness and death of Jesus Christ? Are you determined to renounce the dominion which the devil, the world, and the flesh, naturally have over you? to forsake every known sin, in a desire that no sin may be hid from you, and to oppose all the suggestions of the flesh, temptations of the world, and devices of the devil, that would draw you into sin? And are you determined also to make conformity to God's will and commandments the great end you will aim at in all your conduct, searching what that will of the Lord is, labouring to bring yourself to it, and never allowing yourself to dispense with the performance of any the least part of it on any consideration? Now, what say you? Is it still your language, "By God's help so I will?" What! does nobody among us find any drawing back in his heart? What! is there no crying, from within, "It is too much; these are hard sayings? Must it be all this? Will nothing less satisfy?" Why, Sirs, you see it is all this, and not a jot less. And if you have not a will to it all, you are as yet no believer, no Christian; neither have you any part in the Gospel salvation. Your heart is unchanged, you are still a natural man, whatever be the outward regular form of your life; and you have still all to learn, as to the eternal welfare of your soul; for you see plainly your will is still in a state of enmity and opposition to the will

of God.—But if you say, I have a will to all these things, I would desire you, for preventing all mistakes, to inquire further,

*Thirdly.*—Whether you are determined thus to believe and do by a constant faithful recourse to the help of God? For your diligence in seeking that help, without which you own you cannot do any of these things, will be your best proof that you have really given unto you a will to do them. If you say, I am determined to believe and do as a Christian ought, and yet do not seek the help of God to give you power for the work; do not pray, do not read, do not communicate, do not meditate; where can be your good will to your Christian duty? It is not a warm and hasty resolution, that proves you have a heart fixed and determined herein, but a steady deliberate choice, producing an unwearied diligence in the use of all the means of your obtaining that grace, without which you can perform none of these things: yet neither is it a formal customary attendance upon, and going over all these means, that will argue the determination of heart that is in question; but an attendance upon them in a sincere, earnest, express desire of obtaining grace to grow in faith, to overcome sin, and to serve God. If you have really thus a will to the work, and are perseveringly seeking God's help for the power; if, whenever you come short or fall, you still continue calling upon God to give you more grace, and are never beat out of your seeking it by any discouragements, you are the Christian; and however great your imperfections, and manifold your

failures, still be assured that Christ *lives in you, and you in him*; for no less than that is the very truth of your case.

What has been now submitted to inquiry very properly affords ground for an address to all who are here present. And,

*First.*—To those who are young, and as yet but growing up to years of discretion. What I have to say to them on the occasion is, that until they understand what their godfathers and godmothers promised for them, really perceive themselves bound to believe and do what was so promised in their name, and find themselves moved and stirred up in their hearts to be sincerely willing hereunto, and are actually calling upon God to give them grace for the performance of it, they ought not to come to confirmation; because they therein declare, that having weighed these things, and carefully examined into their own hearts, they find themselves determined to perform them by the help of God. It were to be wished that this excellent institution were administered with more frequency, and attended upon with more reverence, to the end that young persons might be led to more serious impressions of the importance there is in publicly declaring themselves content with, and determined to practise, their baptismal vow. But how absurd is it that very children should be admitted to confirmation, as if the imposition of hands were a kind of charm that should do them good, when themselves knew neither the *why* nor the *wherefore* of the transaction! And if young persons should not come

to confirmation till they have both understanding of the baptismal vow, and also good will to the performance of it, how much less should they be encouraged to come to the Lord's table under such disqualification, to gratify the formality of others, and to their own exceeding hurt and hindrance! But,

*Secondly.*—What has been now brought into inquiry may be very properly addressed to those whose consciences have testified against them that they have not a will to believe and do what, as Christians, is bound upon them. My dear friends, I cannot be so insensible to your condition, as not to beseech you to consider how miserable that condition is. If ye had not been born in a Christian country, if ye had not been baptized in the name of Christ, if ye had never heard the word of God, your case had not been so bad as now it is. But all these advantages ye have enjoyed in vain. In vain? alas! worse than in vain; to the vast increase of your guilt. For ye cannot but think in your own minds, that *it shall be more tolerable for the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah, in the day of judgment, than for you.* Ye have heard the Master's will, but have not done it; your stripes therefore shall be the *more*. Take this thought home with you. “Surely there is no salvation but in Christ; I see not any shadow of hope but in him; yet in him I am not; for I believe not, nor do as he hath commanded. Should death come upon me as I now am, could I be safe? Would not my case be wretched for ever? It must be otherwise with me than it has been. But when? Hereafter?”

“ But why not now, as well? now, that the word  
 “ and Spirit call me? Ah, that I could say, by  
 “ God’s help I will be a Christian indeed! How  
 “ easy would my mind then be! It must be done.  
 “ Up, my soul, for death stands at the door; and  
 “ thou art undone if it find thee thus; undone with-  
 “ out remedy for ever and ever.” O what a thought  
 is it, that there are so many among us who will not  
 do what their sureties promised for them!

*Lastly.*—To those who have had a comfortable answer upon the inquiry, know their Master’s will, have a will to do it, and are diligently seeking grace to enable them to the performance, I would observe, that it is their duty to be “ heartily thankful to their  
 “ heavenly Father, that he hath called them to this  
 “ state of salvation through Jesus Christ;” to bear upon their hearts the liveliest and most abiding sense of his goodness towards them therein; and to shew forth their gratitude by a life of patience, perseverance, and praise. It is their duty also to pray always unto God that he will give them grace to continue in well-doing unto their lives’ end, never weary, and never discouraged; adding grace unto grace; growing in the inner man, and getting more above the devil, world, and flesh, that they be more serviceable to God in their generation, and may wait with more longing desire for their inheritance in the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.



## S E R M O N III.

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ACTS xvi. 30.

*What must I do to be saved?*

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THE motives and obligations to keep and walk in the practice of the baptismal vow having been sufficiently set forth, we are now to proceed unto the explanation of the vow itself. It consists of *three* parts:—

*First.*—A renunciation of the devil, the world, and the flesh.

*Secondly.*—A belief of all the articles of the Christian faith.

*Thirdly.*—Keeping God's holy will and commandments, and walking in the same all the days of your life.

Concerning these three particulars, it will be proper now, before we enter on a special examination of them, to observe, in general, what has been before touched upon, the necessity of such renunciation, faith, and obedience. And this lies purely in the condition of our fallen nature, which, like that of the fallen angels, is a state of atheism as to the practice of any faith in God, love towards him, reverence

of him, trust in him, desire to please him ; in short, as to any happiness resulting from the knowledge of his infinite and eternal excellencies, his nearness to us, and our relation and dependence upon him. The reason why by nature we are thus without God in the world is, because in our fallen state there is a principle in us, called sin or the flesh, under the influence of which (while in that state) we think, act, and live, independent of God, seeking all our sufficiencies from the creature instead of the Creator, having all our ends and aims centring in ourselves, not in him. Now this being the state of man by nature, is plainly a state of alienation from God, and rebellion against him ; and, as such, a state of misery : for being a state of alienation, it has evidently cut us off from all possibility of happiness, which can only be had in God ; and, being a state of rebellion, has exposed us to his almighty wrath and indignation. Left in this state, our ruin is as certain as that of the fallen angels ; yet to deliver ourselves out of it we have neither will nor power. We cannot divest ourselves of our nature ; and, while that remains, we shall always set up *self*, and reject God for happiness ; or, if we could return to submission, how could we heal the breach made by our apostacy, and avert divine indignation ? Now, to heal this breach, to satisfy God's injured honour, and to bring man back to his proper place of dependency ; by the former to open a way to man's happiness in God, by the latter to bring him into the enjoyment of it ; this is the business of the Son of God in the character of Medi-

ator. The salvation thus wanted, and thus provided, the person here speaking does solemnly declare his unfeigned acceptance of in the words of the baptismal profession, wherein, upon a previous acquaintance with the sinfulness and misery of his fallen state, and with the salvation that is in Jesus Christ, he thus publicly declares himself. “ I abhor and detest the  
“ dominion which the devil, the world, and the flesh,  
“ have naturally over me, and under which I lived,  
“ till Christ came to me by his word and Spirit,  
“ shewed me my misery in that sad condition, offered  
“ me mercy, and gave me deliverance from this ac-  
“ cursed slavery. And now that I am set at liberty,  
“ I do, as my sponsors in my baptism promised I  
“ should, most avowedly renounce, to the glory of  
“ God and the comfort of his church, the service  
“ of all these mine enemies ; fully determined, by  
“ the grace of God, never more to yield myself unto  
“ them ; but continually to oppose them, rejecting  
“ steadily all their solicitations, and taking every  
“ measure for lessening the influence I do or may  
“ find they have over me.—And, in a renunciation  
“ of these, I do, as it was promised I should further  
“ do, avouch my cordial and thankful acceptance of  
“ the covenant of grace, sincerely believing in, and  
“ humbly relying upon, that way of salvation that  
“ is in Christ Jesus my Saviour, wherein reverently  
“ and confidently I lay hold of God, Father, Son,  
“ and Holy Ghost, as my reconciled God ; whom I  
“ desire henceforward to regard as my Father in the  
“ merits of Jesus Christ, with whom I wish to live

“ in a blessed communion and fellowship as my most  
“ desired happiness here, and in whom I wait and  
“ look for perfect and everlasting glory hereafter.—  
“ And I am now so well convinced of the excellency  
“ of his majesty, and the obligations of duty and  
“ gratitude that lie upon me, that I do, as was like-  
“ wise engaged for in my name, solemnly consent to  
“ his absolute dominion over me, desiring to partake  
“ of the valuable liberty and perfect freedom of serving  
“ him, according to his revealed mind and will, all  
“ the days of my life: and this in a constant sub-  
“ jection of my whole self, soul, body, and spirit,  
“ which are all his, to his pleasure: and in a con-  
“ formity of every thought, word, and work, to his  
“ commandments.”

And now what does the whole of this amount to, but that, seeing by nature we are apostate creatures, serving the devil, the world, and the flesh, and, in that estate, rushing on to eternal ruin, we must needs accept that deliverance from these enemies which Christ offers us? And seeing also there is no reconciliation with God for us but in Jesus Christ, and that otherwise we remain the objects of his wrath, we must close with it, and make it ours in a cordial acceptance of it? And seeing yet further, that by nature we are alienated from God, being set up for ourselves to be our own masters, we must return to our place, submit to God's government, and yield ourselves his servants to obey him? So that the necessity of this vow, in the several parts of it, lies in the very nature of our fallen state, from which we

cannot have deliverance but in the true keeping of this vow; which keeping of the baptismal vow is, you see, no other than a fallen creature's acceptance of the salvation that is in Jesus Christ. For only suppose a man truly acquainted with the sad circumstances of his natural state, as a state of sin under the devil, the world, and the flesh, a state of wrath, and a state of alienation from God, and what will he desire? When he sees what a state of sin and spiritual death he lies in, and what wretched monsters have the guidance of him, will he not wish to be set free from them, and to be taken out of his horrid condition? When he sees death at his door, and hell opening its mouth to swallow him up in its everlasting and most intolerable flames, will he not wish to be saved from so great a damnation, to have God reconciled to him, and to exchange everlasting misery for endless glory? And, finally, when he sees himself without the image of God in his soul, his affections alienated from him, and that he has no love towards him, nor desire after him, nor delight in him, nor any thing, in short, of the obediential spirit of a dependent creature remaining within him, will he not wish to be restored to original purity, seeing without this he knows he cannot be capable of any happiness in God, and that in heaven itself he should miss of a reward? You see the whole matter is, a fallen creature, made sensible of his fallen state, desires help; and when he finds that help offered him in Christ, he accepts it: that is to say, seeing Christ offers him deliverance from sin, the world, and the

devil, he accepts it; seeing Christ offers him deliverance from wrath and hell, he accepts it; seeing Christ offers to restore unto him the image of God upon his soul, he accepts it; the vow itself being but the public declaration and avowal of such his acceptance.

Such is the nature and the necessity of the baptismal vow. And, taken in the light wherein the matter now lies before us, *three* very plain and incontestable consequences present themselves to us, highly worth our notice.

I.—That such as deny or are ignorant of the state they are in by nature cannot have accepted the offer of salvation, nor possibly be keeping the baptismal vow.

II.—That such as are not keeping the baptismal vow are still in their natural state.

III.—That they who are keeping it are actually in a state of present salvation.

All which have been glanced at before, but now require a more distinct consideration.

*First.*—Such as deny or are ignorant of the state they are in by nature cannot have accepted the offer of salvation, nor possibly be keeping the baptismal vow, so they must needs be still in their natural state of sin and death. The Christian salvation (and of course the acceptance thereof, together with the baptismal vow, which is but the declaration of that acceptance) stands altogether upon the supposition of our fallen state, and the several parts of that salvation upon the several circumstances of our condition by

nature; so that my acceptance of this salvation can only follow upon my acquaintance with my fallen estate, which, consequently, if I am unacquainted with, I cannot possibly accept that salvation. Consider, therefore, have you been made deeply and thoroughly acquainted with your fallen and lost condition by nature? Have you been brought to see yourself an apostate creature, in whom dwelleth only a principle and body of sin, which is perpetually suggesting to you its evil, that is, its sensual, earthly, and devilish motions; a principle that naturally engages to itself all your thoughts, desires, and pursuits; a principle that cannot delight in God, and would not you should have any thought of him, or converse with him; a principle that naturally wraps you up in yourself, shutting out of your conduct every consideration due to God and man; a principle that naturally makes you mind nothing but *self*, and mean nothing but *self*, your own praise, your own interest, your own gratification; a carnal principle, craving indulgence, ease, pleasure; a worldly principle, all for the present life, its honours and interests; a devilish principle, stirring up in your heart high thoughts of yourself, low ones of others; envy, malice, resentment, revenge, cruelty? I say, has past and present experience taught you that you are thus born in sin? And have you been made to see this state of sin as a state of misery, as that whereon is entailed the wrath and curse of God; as that which has made you liable to present death, and future eternal misery; and as a state, too, whereby your

soul is robbed of its richest jewel, the image of God, which before the fall was the grand prerogative, the distinguished glory, the noble qualification of man for serving and enjoying his Creator? Have you found yourself this corrupted, fallen, undone creature? If not, you cannot have accepted the offer of Christ, who cannot be a physician to the *whole*. If you *deny* that you are thus fallen, you disclaim all that can properly be called salvation, determinately strike your name out of the list of those whom Christ shall save, and put your eternal happiness upon a footing, which, after all your fine reasonings, gives you little support, and which you feel in your own breast will not bear you out against the sense of guilt, and the fear of death and judgment. And if you are *ignorant* of this your fallen state through mere carelessness and inconsideration, though I dare not say your case is alike desperate with that of gainsayers, yet I must say your state is at present equally bad: you are not, you cannot be, in Christ; for you have never found the want of him, and therefore could never receive him to be your Saviour. And I beseech you, sirs, consider what a wrong you must have been doing to your own souls. What! not so much as to inquire whether you were a fallen creature or not? In so many years to make no search whether you wanted not salvation? and so to suffer the Lord of glory to stand waiting upon you with the offer of salvation, without paying him the least regard? How can you answer this to yourself? Sure I am, if you have not lost your reason, you cannot acquit yourself to your



own conscience. And the reflection cannot sit easy upon you, that, if there be salvation in Christ, however much you need it, you have no part therein, through your own shameful negligence of looking into yourself, and searching after the deplorable circumstances of our fallen state. But some of you are saying, “ I know I am a corrupted creature ; I confess myself by nature a child of wrath ; I own the loss of the image of God which I suffered in Adam.” To you, therefore, I propose for inquiry,

*Secondly.*—Whether you are keeping the baptismal vow? For, if you are not, your case is not a jot mended, however exactly you may know both your lost estate by nature, and that there is free and full salvation in Jesus Christ. The point is, whether or no you have closed with and accepted that salvation ; which acceptance has been fully shewn to be no other thing than being in the practice of the baptismal vow. If you are living in sin, or not seeking to apply unto yourself the merits of Christ for your pardon and acceptance with God, or not endeavouring in your whole conduct to serve and please God, it is plain you have not accepted the offered salvation, and are still in your natural state. Now therefore look to yourself. If you are the person I am now intending, one that has knowledge, and knowledge only concerning man’s misery and Christ’s salvation, your case is this: you know that you are a fallen creature, sensual, earthly, and devilish by nature, and you know that there is deliverance from the dominion of sin in Christ, yet sin hath full dominion over you.

Either you are wholly led away in your heart and conduct by the love of pleasure, of indulgence, of sloth, and worldly ease; or you are under the power of covetousness, your mind carking and caring for the things of the world, never satisfied, and ever intent upon the main point of being *something* in life through your wealth; or you are under the direction of worldly esteem, not daring to be better than is consistent with keeping your reputation among your neighbours; or you are of an unhumbed spirit; wayward, you must have your own way, and are angry whether God or man thwart you; proud, you are lifted up by whatever seems to distinguish you from others. These and the like are your ruling tempers. Now, if all or any of this be your case, you cannot say that in practice you are renouncing the devil, the world, and the flesh, or have partaken of Christ's salvation from the dominion of sin. So in this respect it is plain you are still in your natural state. Then, again, you have a knowledge in your head that you are a guilty creature, and that there is perfect reconciliation in Christ; but you have made no use of, you have received no benefit from, this knowledge; you are not humbled and alarmed at the sight of your condition; you have no sense of the value of the reconciliation; you have not drawn nigh to the throne of grace by the blood of the atonement; your heart is not sprinkled from an evil conscience by it; you are not *filled*, you are not so much as acquainted with what is meant by *peace in believing*; all that you know of this important matter is but as the know-

ledge of a foreign tale, in which you have no concern. See, then, if the guilt of all your sins does not yet lie upon you. Finally, you know that to be brought to the love and practice of God's commandments is a principal part of Christ's salvation, and of your want by nature. But with any love of God's law in your heart you are perfectly unacquainted; neither can you say, that to walk therein is your main, your grand, your ruling, nay, that it is in any measure your real, deliberate, concern. What! are you striving every day to walk with God, watchful over your conduct, that nothing you do may displease or dishonour him, studying above all things how you may please him, and how you may every day abound therein more and more; and calling ardently and constantly for his grace to enable you to do so? Alas! you know this is not the employment of your ordinary thoughts and desires; other things, as I have said, of various kinds, perpetually take you up: God has not the sway and rule within. Of pleasing him you think but little. You do not ask whether what you do be agreeable to his mind or not. You live in needless temptations. Your ordinary course is forgetfulness of God, and to do what he bids you is far from being the settled design of your life. I beseech you, therefore, are you, or can you desire to be thought, God's servant? Your conscience testifies you are not, and therefore acknowledges that Christ has not circumcised your heart to love and serve the Lord your God. Brethren, let us not be deceived: let not our knowledge deceive us. You see, whatever knowledge a man has of him-

self, and of Jesus Christ, yet, if he be not in the practice of the baptismal vow, he has not accepted Christ's offer, therefore is no true Christian; and consequently is in his natural state of sin and wrath. A state which, however terrible it be to all that are in it, is peculiarly so to such as know their Master's will and do it not. But,

*Thirdly.*—You are really, though imperfectly, walking in the baptismal vow. Sin has not dominion over you; you have come as an undone sinner to Christ, and taken him for your Saviour, and are determined also not to part with him, though you suffer the loss of all things; to please God and serve him is your main desire and aim: you are therefore in a present state of salvation; for you have heard it made apparent, that to be in the practice of the baptismal vow, and to receive Christ in his whole salvation, are exactly the same thing. And you are in the practice of this your vow; for are you not fighting daily against sin, opposing the body of sin in you, and never lying down under its dominion, though it sometimes gain advantage of you? Are not your eyes upon Jesus for pardon and acceptance with your injured God? Have you not taken, and do you not continually take, refuge in his blood from the accusations of conscience and dread of the law? And your business, is it not through a supply of the Spirit of the same Jesus, to live a godly life, desiring to be conformed to God's revealed mind, and making that, and not your own inclinations, nor the humours of others, the measure of your conduct? This you cannot deny, and this

you ought to own to the glory of that grace by which you thus stand and walk in the midst of so many enemies and temptations, and cumbered as you are with flesh and blood. I say you ought to own it to the glory of God, and to your own comfort and encouragement. And if you are thus walking, I see not the least cause you have to suspect your being passed from death unto life, although I know also the devil will be persuading you to the contrary. Give him no heed; tell him you know his character, that he is *the accuser of the brethren*; and you know his doom too, that he shall as such *be cast down*, Rev. xii. 10. Insist upon it against him, that by nature sin had the whole power of you, but now, though it lives, it doth not *reign*; that you are sure this could not be through any power of your own, any more than a dead body can raise itself out of the grave. Insist, that once you were dead, but now you are alive, for you find spiritual life in you, you feel the motions, the desires, the longings, the resolves of one whose soul lives, and you are sure it is not your natural self which doth this, but Christ who liveth in you. And if you are charged with in-dwelling sin and imperfection, acknowledge it, but avouch the righteousness of Christ, and insist, notwithstanding, that you are accepted in the well-beloved. You, brethren, are the very children of God in Christ Jesus. God hath called, justified, and sanctified you, and you are in the way to glory. You ought to be sensible of the inestimable gift you have received, to value the noble honour you are admitted to, to boast

of the high privileges you enjoy in Christ Jesus. Ah, sirs! a very little time will shew the world how blessed you are: the day of the Lord will shew it. When Jesus comes with power and glory in the clouds, the whole world shall own that *ye are the blessed of the Lord who made heaven and earth*. Then sinners of every degree, then malignant devils shall own it to their confusion, *when Christ shall be glorified in his saints, and honoured in all them that believe*. Be of good comfort, therefore, *be strong, acquit you like men*; hold fast the beginning of your confidence steadfast unto the end, for God will bruise Satan under your feet shortly. O be sensible how great things the Lord hath done for your souls!

## S E R M O N   I V .

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ACTS xvi. 30.

*What must I do to be saved ?*

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OUR last Discourse on the Church Catechism related to the necessity of the baptismal vow in all the parts of it, which necessity was seen to lie in our fallen and lost estate by nature, from which the actual renunciation, faith, and obedience spoken of in the vow, is a present, true, and real deliverance.

The way, therefore, is now opened to a particular examination of the three distinct parts of it. The first of them is the renunciation of “ the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh.” Which renunciation you see also hath its three parts; each of which must be separately considered. And it will be proper to introduce this particular explanation by observing (for the better understanding the whole of it, and that the renunciation itself may be seen at once in a comprehensive view), that by and since the fall there is a principle of sin in the nature of man, which I cannot better describe than by calling it a principle of carnal independency, by which man (as the

devils did before him) withdraws himself from dependence on God, and sets up for his own master, and to be happy as well as he can without God. Now man thus set up for himself, and determined by his fallen nature to have nothing to do with God, and to seek his happiness not in God, finds himself in a world which he looks upon as his own, and to which he entirely gives himself up, seeking in the things of it to gratify his proud independent spirit, and to please his carnal inclinations. Into this state of carnal independency he was originally led through the malicious artifice of the devil, who, having seduced him into this apostacy, and thus fixed him on the world, has made him his own subject, and, by means of this carnal independency in his nature, continually wrought upon by the things of the world, does keep him actually and truly under his own proper direction and guidance all the while he continues in this natural state. So that, you see man in his natural state is a creature who, according to his power, has made himself independent of God in pride, and is under the power of carnal inclination; who is fixed upon the world for the gratification of the independent carnal principle that is in his nature; and is secretly led by the devil, who, by working upon this principle of sin in a continual and engaging representation of the things of the world, does entirely, yet with the man's own freest choice, direct and lead him as he pleases.

Here we may find, then, to what the renunciation before us has regard; that it is a professed renunciation of this natural state, and consequently imports a



declaration to this purpose : “ I do solemnly and re-  
 “ solvedly renounce the service of my sinful nature,  
 “ neither will I henceforward in the pride of my heart  
 “ live as independent of God, nor yield myself a ser-  
 “ vant to my carnal inclinations. And therefore I  
 “ do avow myself determined to forego that worldly  
 “ course of conduct which is the gratification of my  
 “ natural pride and carnal inclination. As also here-  
 “ with and hereby I reject Satan’s dominion, being  
 “ steadfastly purposed by no art of his to be prevailed  
 “ upon to return to his service, by yielding myself to  
 “ live after the natural desires of my heart, which I  
 “ will constantly oppose notwithstanding all his al-  
 “ lurements or terrors, being firmly determined, in  
 “ my own person, as well by my example as by my  
 “ influence, to do what in my power is to combat  
 “ with and destroy the practice of sin, and therewith  
 “ the dominion and tyranny which by means of sin  
 “ the devil has established, and is still maintaining  
 “ in the world.”

After this general view of the baptismal renuncia-  
 tion, I am now at full liberty to proceed to the several  
 parts of it. The *first* of which is a renunciation of  
*the devil and all his works*. Here we will first ex-  
 plain the words themselves, and then come to certain  
 practical considerations arising from them.

And, *first*, for the explanation. And here we must  
 shew what is meant by *the devil*, what by *his works* ;  
 and, under each, what it is to *renounce* him and  
 them.

*The devil*.—Every one knows that by the *devil* is

meant the fallen angels, the leader of whom is here only mentioned, though all of them be intended. But seeing the point is, we are here *renouncing the devil*, it is plain that he is considered not simply as he is in himself, but as he stands related to us. For to renounce signifies to refuse, forsake, and cast off; and this we could not be called upon to do in the present case, unless the devil had concerns with us. Wherefore by the devil, in this place, is to be understood, the devil as he stands related to us in our natural state. And what his relation to us in that state is, is very plain, from the titles given him in Scripture; where he is called *the prince of this world*, *the god of this world*, and the like: expressions which evidently set him out as having dominion over the world, that is, over the men of the world, all of us by nature, who, while we are in our natural state, are of this world, and, as such, *of the devil*, his actual, real, subjects. By the devil, we mean the devil as having usurped a dominion over us, the devil as our king, prince, and ruler.

Consequently, when we say we *renounce the devil*, we mean, that we renounce the devil as having dominion over us, that we cast off his service, that we no more allow him to have any guidance and direction of us. An angel may say, “I have no dealings with the devil;” but a sinner must say more. “Once I did, but now I will serve him no longer, I will submit to no more of his orders, I declare myself none of his subjects, I will pay no regard to his intimations, I will not yield myself again to him

“ upon any of his fair but false enticements, I will  
 “ not be seduced by his lies, nor frightened by his ter-  
 “ rors into his service ; him as my prince and master  
 “ I absolutely and for ever disavow, and to him and  
 “ his interests I am a professed determined enemy.”  
 It follows,

*And all his works.*—I not only renounce him, but also *all his works*. Though it be true that all sin in general is originally the work of the devil, as far as his tempting thereto may make it *his* ; and though it be true, also, that there are certain sins, such as pride, malice, envy, and the like, which in a peculiar propriety may be called *his*, because first and most malignantly in him : yet, inasmuch as sin in general, and these devil-like sins in particular, are more properly ours, when considered as dwelling in us, than his, who does but tempt us to them ; and inasmuch, also, as all sin in general and particular is actually included under *the lusts of the flesh*, and there renounced ; I conceive that by *the works of the devil* here must be understood something different, and, therefore, that it means sin, in general and particular, in a peculiar reference to the devil’s kingdom, and all such things as the devil supports his dominion by ; for these are *his* own proper works, and are wrought for *his* own proper end.

Accordingly, when I say *I renounce all the works of the devil*, I declare, *First*, That, because it is by sin that the devil maintains his dominion in the world, I will practise no sin : neither in me nor by my

means shall he hold dominion through my sin. I declare, *Secondly*, That, since it is by the general countenance given to sin in the world that he upholds his tyranny, he shall not have the countenance of my example and influence to support his cause. And I declare, *Thirdly*, That I myself will not give into it, and will discourage in others those various lying artifices of his by which he keeps up his hellish usurpation upon earth; such as all kind of superstitious usages, which have no foundation in the word of God, and do serve to keep men from him by the deceit of the devil, and his holding them under unreasonable fears, as idolatry among the Heathen, false worship among the Papists, and, among us, faith in charms, ominous days, fortune-tellers, conjurers, and the like. *Fourthly*, Since by raising persecution against the church of God the devil attempts at last to support his kingdom, therefore I will not have a hand in any such work. Seeing by these and the like things the devil works to support his kingdom, which by seducing Adam unto sin he erected in the world, I declare that I will not meddle with any of them, and that I disclaim all his works of darkness, being absolutely resolved, that, as I will no longer serve him myself, so I will not allow myself in the practice of any one thing, great or small, by which he does in his subjects and followers labour to keep himself in the possession of his usurped government over the wicked world.

And thus much of the explanation. Let us come

now to the improvement ; which shall consist of an examination, and a suitable exhortation as our case shall be.

The examination is: *Have we renounced the devil, and all his works?* This inquiry will serve to make what has been set forth more plain and practical. *Have we renounced the devil, and all his works?* that is, the devil as a prince, who by nature holds an absolute dominion over us. Have we seen the devil holding a dominion over the world? Have we seen that the most of mankind are in subjection to it? Have we seen him leading all those without exception who are not delivered by Christ captive at his will? Have we seen that ourselves are his natural-born subjects? Have we seen his dominion over ourselves and others with abhorrence and detestation? Have we gone over from him ourselves unto Christ, and declared against him, to win others from him unto the Lord? Brethren, have we thus seen, hated, and forsaken the kingdom of the devil? Take notice, this cannot be the case, if we be not renouncing *the works of the devil*, those works whereby the devil holds his dominion upon earth. Wherefore are none of you committing sin? What! my dear brethren, none of you committing drunkenness, or swearing, or sabbath-breaking, or fornication? What! not one who is guilty of any of these things? No; nor one covetous person, one proud, one revengeful, person here; nor one liar, nor one lover of pleasures, nor one living after the course of this world? What! is not sin practised by any of us? Can we all say, I am clean, every

one for himself in the presence of God? Well, whosoever cannot, whosoever conscience pronounces him guilty, may know, and must be told, that he is of the devil. It is not I that say this upon my own authority. It is God that says, "Whosoever committeth sin is of the devil," belongs to him, and is his servant. You do not, I am sensible, like to think yourself to be, or to be told, that you are the devil's child. Why then you must by grace forsake sin, for till you do that, while you commit sin, you are of the devil; every drunkard is of the devil, every whoremonger of the devil, every swearer, every liar, of the devil, every covetous, vain, carnal, proud, revengeful person, is of the devil. Nay, sirs, but we are all still either of the devil or not; and this one word shall prove us, "he that committeth sin is of the devil, for whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin." And is it true, then, that every soul living in sin is the devil's child and property? O that ever that monster should have so many children where Christ is named, and among those who are baptized into his name! Nay, you say, but I trust I am not committing sin. Well; but are you not carelessly encouraging it in the world? I do not ask whether you designedly encourage it. To do this is to be a very devil incarnate. And yet (it must be spoken out) we have heard of such things particularly, such as encouraging, forcing, and deceiving others into the great sin of drunkenness; but, I ask, are you not carelessly encouraging sin in the world? But how shall this be determined? Why, if you care

not though Satan have the upper hand of Christ in the world, if you do not so much as consider whether your conduct be for the encouragement of Christ's kingdom or the devil's, if you will not forego the veriest trifle for the cause of Christ, and because you see it does, or fear it may, encourage sin in the world; I beseech you, is not this carelessly, at least, being an encourager of it, and can you then be Christ's friend? Can you be doing Christ's work? Are you not plainly doing the devil's? And, if you are serving the devil's interest, judge yourself whose servant you are. Permit me to ask further; while you are thus careless about the cause of Christ, are you not also an enemy to it? You know that persecution is the devil's work for the maintenance of his kingdom; and if you set yourself against those who profess to serve Christ for no other reason than because they profess to do so, do not you evidently lend your hand to the devil, and, in fact, however ignorantly, avow yourself to be his friend, while you thus declare yourself to be the enemy of Christ? Suffer me to deal freely where your souls are at stake. From what motive can any one set himself, by foolish jests, banter, ridicule, or whatever influence, to discourage those who desire to live after the commands of Christ, and, if they are not to be sneered nor frightened from their purpose, to look upon them with disgust and an evil eye, or to be ready to do them a bad turn? I beseech you, what manner of spirit is this? Does it come from above or below? Is it the mind of Christ or of his adversary?

And now, what says Conscience upon this inquiry? Are we, or are we not, renouncing the devil and all his works? If we are not declared enemies of the kingdom of sin, if we live in the practice of it, if our examples encourage it, if we are enemies to and opposers of serious Scripture godliness, (if, as I might have added above, but I chose not to detain you,) if while we are living after the course of the world we are propping ourselves by vain superstitions, and putting our faith in the devil instead of Christ, then it is manifest whose subjects we are, and that we have not yet renounced the devil and his works. But if to see the extent and cruelty of Satan's dominion be our grief and abhorrence; if we determinately forsake the practice of sin ourselves, and will not wittingly by our example give it the least countenance in others; if in deed as well as word we stand up for the cause and the people of Christ, and discountenance every thing great or little that makes for the kingdom of the devil, then it is not less manifest on the other part that we have indeed renounced the devil and all his works.

And shall I now need say any thing more to such as have been found in their own consciences the servants of Satan? To think of being in subjection to that monster, who is the avowed open enemy of the God that made him, the very height and summit of all malignity and sin, whose heart knows nothing but cruelty, revenge, fury, and most malicious pleasure in our ruin; to think of serving his interests too, of being employed night and day in promoting his hellish



designs in the world, of being given up in all the actions of life to enlarge and establish his kingdom ; to think of being made use of as his tools, presumptuously to oppose, and, as it were, to brave God to his face ; to publish abroad the devil's triumph ; to hinder, hurt, and wound the cause of that gracious Jesus, who so kindly came and died to save us, and to be set up against all those that own and follow him ! To think of this ! What need of arguments ? What can be said more ? If there were no hell wherewith the devil will reward such faithful services, what need be said more ? O sirs ! if you would but think whom you serve, and what dishonourable services you are employed in, you could not be easy, you would by grace change masters, and flee unto Jesus to deliver you from the power of the devil. The Lord God Almighty, in whose hands ten thousand devils are but as the dust of a balance, enable you to do so !

And you, the children of God, the followers of the Lamb, who hath delivered you from the snares of the devil ; will you, can you stand by and see these your poor brethren led captive by Satan, employed in his work, and going down to his dark dreadful habitation ? Can you see this and not mourn over them, and pray for them ? Ah, mourn and pray for these immortal souls ! Where, where is your pity ? Where is your zeal, if you do not mourn, and pray, and labour for them ? Methinks we should pray down heaven upon their heads, to consider what a condition they are in, how fast Satan holds them in his chain ! You know how often, how earnestly, I have pleaded with them.

And do not you still fear, as I do, that they will not now be prevailed upon? O, if you have any love for Christ or them, if you would wish to see them with you in the bosom of Abraham, in the arms of Jesus, pity them and pray for them! Ah, you know their time is short! How suddenly will they be where I tremble to think of their dwelling for ever, unless something be now done for them! Now, now, pity and pray for them! Sirs, you will not, you cannot surely stand still in such a cause! O, that I had the tongue of a *Paul* to provoke you! O, that I had but a little of his zeal for Jesus! Why, sirs, it is the cause of Jesus. It is the cause of Jesus against Satan. Why are we not more ready to spend and be spent for Jesus? To you, and, alas! to me among the rest, he has intrusted his cause, his interest, his honour in this place. It is by you the kingdom of Satan must be confronted and confounded in this place. What then are we doing? Shall we still continue so little to bestir ourselves? Up, my friends! Satan is a vanquished enemy! Jesus thrust him headlong from heaven. O, watch, pray, live, die, for the confusion of the kingdom of the devil, and for the advancement of the kingdom of the Lord Jesus!

# S E R M O N V.

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ACTS xvi. 30.

*What must I do to be saved?*

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THE intimate connexion there is between the three things we are called upon as Christians to renounce should be carefully attended to, that we may preserve upon our minds the clearest conviction of the necessity lying upon us to renounce them all. The devil reigns by means of our corrupt affections ; and the power and prevalence of these is maintained by being fixed upon the world and engaging us in the pursuit of the things of it. As long as the world is allowed to have the ascendancy, the corrupt principle does in that very ascendancy hold the direction of us, and we remain the subjects of Satan. Wherefore the actual renunciation of one of these is in fact the renouncing them all. When the devil is dethroned, the flesh does not rule, and the world has lost its influence. When the affections are withdrawn from the world, the flesh is in a state of subjection, and the devil cast out. When the flesh is mortified, the world is rejected, and the devil has lost his power. You see, turn it which way you will, it is but saying

over again the very same thing ; and, therefore, that the renunciation of any one of these three things is impossible while either of the other are submitted to. If you have not renounced the dominion of the devil, you are actually serving the world and the flesh ; if you are a friend of the world, the devil and the flesh are your masters ; and to yield to the flesh is inevitably connected with living after the course of the world, and serving the devil.

I am now to speak of *renouncing the pomps and vanities of this wicked world*. Concerning which my method shall be, as before, *first*, to explain the matter, and, *secondly*, to improve it.

*This wicked world*.—The world in itself is not wicked, being God's creature, and therefore is, *as every creature of God is*, declared to be *good*, 1 Tim. iv. 4. But when the world is considered as it is abused in the use of it through the corruption and degeneracy of our hearts, and as being full of those who give up their hearts to it instead of God, it may well be called a *wicked world*. There are two reasons, therefore, why you are taught to call the world wicked ; one, because our perverted hearts are set thereupon in a wicked abuse and forgetfulness of God, to seek our happiness therein, and to place our trust upon it : the other, because the number of those who follow this perverted propensity of their hearts, and in divers ways seek their all in the world, is so great, that they in a manner overspread the whole face of the earth ; in reference to which St. John saith, *We know that the whole world lieth in wickedness*. By this wicked

world, then, is to be understood the world when it is made the supreme ruling object of our desires, in a conformity with the maxims, customs, and authority of the generality of mankind, who live upon the same worldly plan.

By *the pomps and vanities of this wicked world* we are to apprehend in general those various things that are in the world, which draw and engage unto a worldly course the most of mankind, indeed all but those few who are taken out of the world by the transforming power of faith in Jesus Christ. And, therefore, more particularly those things by which the world captivates and enslaves all men by nature, and the most of men continuedly in fact; such as honour, riches, pleasure, and the like, that is (to say all in two words), the indulgence and the pride of life.

To *renounce the pomps and vanities of this wicked world* must therefore accordingly mean these three things. *First*, In a steady, constant, and resolute opposition to the desires of our corrupted nature, to withdraw the affections from this present state of things, so as no longer either to seek happiness or to place confidence therein, but to be determined to seek our all in God. And how reasonable is it that it should be thus! how dishonourable to God that we should ascribe all-sufficiency to the creature, and deny it to the Creator, by seeking our all in it and not in him! *Secondly*, To give up in desire and pursuit every particular thing that is in the world, when considered as standing in competition with God for the love and trust of our hearts, or the direction of our

conduct ; whether it be worldly ease or pleasure on the one side, or worldly esteem or interest on the other. And, consequently, *Thirdly*, To be disposed, and to live and act in a direct contrariety to the children of this world who make up the bulk of mankind, departing absolutely from their aims and pursuits, totally disavowing the authority of worldly custom, resolutely foregoing worldly example as any rule of conduct, disclaiming all those maxims which the world has given its countenance and sanction to, as being vile and abominable ; and, *finally*, at no rate either loving inordinately, or seeking eagerly, or using selfishly, ostentatiously, and indulgently, the world and the things of it as they do.

The whole of the matter put together amounts to this. The true believer in Jesus Christ makes his profession in regard to the world, and says, “ I have  
“ chosen God to be my portion, to whom I desire  
“ and am determined to give up all the affections of  
“ my heart, making him my only hope and all my  
“ happiness. It is not without shame and sorrow  
“ that I reflect how, in conformity with the inclina-  
“ tion of my corrupt nature, I have sadly and sin-  
“ fully suffered myself to be carried out in the desires  
“ of my soul after this present evil world, seeking my  
“ happiness in it, and fixing my trust upon it, saying  
“ thereunto, in the disposition of my heart, Thou art  
“ my God. But I have purposed, and by the grace  
“ of God am determined, that henceforward the Lord,  
“ the invisible and eternal God, shall be my God.  
“ I disclaim and disavow the world to be any more

“ the object of my love and desire, my hope and de-  
“ light, my trust and confidence : I cannot serve  
“ these two masters ; I renounce the world, I regard  
“ it with hatred and detestation as standing in com-  
“ petition for my heart with God ; now I have said  
“ unto the Lord, and now I publicly declare it,  
“ Thou art my God. And further, as I do thus in  
“ general renounce the world, so do I also more  
“ particularly every thing that is in it, the indulgence,  
“ the interest, the reputation it offers me, in such  
“ sort, that neither of them shall be near my heart as  
“ God is, and all of them shall be cheerfully yielded  
“ up when God’s honour or any claim of duty to him  
“ calls for them. And, *finally*, since through the cor-  
“ ruption of our nature I see the world and the things  
“ of it universally abused, that the children of men  
“ everywhere have their affections set upon it, and  
“ that they are eagerly bent upon the pursuit of these  
“ present things alone, therefore I think myself bound  
“ not to enter into any of their ways, not in the least  
“ measure to be biassed by the mere influence of cus-  
“ tom and example in matters of religion, nor to  
“ subscribe to the authority of the world in any thing  
“ relative to my conduct ; but to be always on my  
“ guard against the example and maxims of it, stre-  
“ nuously to oppose them in all my behaviour, and  
“ by no means to use the world as they do who  
“ are of the world, whether by priding myself upon  
“ whatever distinguishes me in it, or by enjoying the  
“ things of it with sinful gratification and indulgence.”

From the explanation I pass on to the improvement.

And here it is very reasonable that we inquire, whether we have renounced the pomps and vanities of this wicked world.—Concerning which, the leading question is this, “Have we renounced the world “itself?” But before this is resolved, observe, if to renounce be to reject, forego, and forsake, and we are all bound to renounce, then naturally we are all of the world, for we cannot forsake that we were never related to and connected with. And, in truth, the state of man by nature is practical atheism. Reflect a moment on the earliest period of your memory and reason, and you will observe, that your whole heart, in the desires, hopes, and fears of it, was fixed on the things you found about you. Whether your desires and pursuits at that time were of importance or not in themselves is not material to the present question; but, whatever they were, you found them fixed on the world, and not on God. Him you delighted not in. God was out of sight. As to any love of him, or trust upon him, he was to you as if there were no such Being. The world was your all. And thus it continued to be, if it be not so to this hour; you lived without God in the world, till by the light of the Gospel the misery of your natural state was laid open to you, and you were brought to God in love through faith in Jesus Christ. The point then to be decided is, whether you have been to this day set at liberty, and in the sincerity of your heart do acknowledge God for your all instead of the world? Now therefore, my brethren, deal fairly and plainly with yourselves, and resolve the important question.



To which of the two do you give your hearts? Is it to the world, or is it to God? To both at once they cannot be given, because they are direct opposites; and yet both put in claim for your hearts; the world by natural usurped possession, God by right. Is then the world cast out? Has God your heart? Are you at a loss how to determine this? I will tell you: you may determine it this way. If you find the desires, the hopes, the fears, the love, the delight of your heart to be habitually on God, you may answer in the affirmative. But if, although you have some thought of God on occasions, some uneasy fears of him, some wishes and hasty purposes of serving him, and although you have never so clear a knowledge in your head that God is better for you and has a better title to your heart than the world, nevertheless you find for one seeming or real desire after God within you there are a thousand after the world, and that your fears, cares, hopes, and prospects, do habitually run out on that side, then 'tis a plain case that you have not the love of God in you, and that you have not as yet renounced the world. This is the leading question. But it is rather general. Let us come to particulars, which may better shew whether we have renounced the world or not: for it is evident we cannot have renounced the world if we be under the power of any of the things of it. Wherefore how does the point stand in respect of your *interest* in the world? Is not ~~this~~ nearer your heart than God? Certainly it must, if while you are very earnest about promoting it, very fearful of whatever would seem to threaten

you with disappointment in it, very active to improve every opportunity of advancing it, you experience no such earnestness, fear, and activity in seeking God, lying on that side in cold indifference, and either not considering what the will of God is when your advantage is in question, or making a sacrifice of that *will* by going unwarrantable lengths to please those by whom you are profited in your worldly interest. Sirs, it is a common saying with many of you, "We must do such things. If we do not do them we cannot get our bread." But this is a worldly maxim; whoever follows it is of the world. He carries his own condemnation in his mouth: "We must do such things." What is this but as much as saying you allow them to be sinful; and yet you do them, because otherwise you cannot live? But this is not true. You may always live without thus sinning, but not perhaps always in that way, or by those means, which you have set your hearts upon; and which while you will not forego, what are you but professing thereby in plain terms your renunciation of God, and determination to cleave unto the world? And what may you reasonably think God will say at last? In truth, what less than this, "Thou hast rejected me, thou hast had thy portion; go, therefore, since thou wouldst have it so, inherit the fruit of thy choice in an eternal separation from my favour and presence?" Again, how doth the matter stand with you upon the article of *pleasures*? Are you not a lover of pleasures more than a lover of God? What! not when your mind is perpetually running upon

these, and while you hardly think of God once in a month? when you are as one bereaved, if no pleasure be in prospect; and even at such a season, when time lies heavy on your hands, you cannot be comforted in the thought of God? when every moment is too long in prayer or the church, and whole hours, and every day, too short when you are in your amusements? Surely in such case you cannot persuade yourself to believe you have renounced the pleasures of the world. Once more, How can you answer respecting the *esteem* of men? Can you say you love the praise of God rather? What! when you dare not do what your conscience bids you, lest you should be laughed at, lest you should forfeit the favour of your friends, lest you should be reckoned stiff and particular? If you will only go so far in religion as is consistent with your worldly reputation, and will not, dare not, move one step further, taking all the pains you can to satisfy yourself that all beyond is too much, and to make the word of God speak a language which will suit this desire you have of keeping the praise of men, you may as soon prevail upon us to think it is dark night at mid-day as that you have renounced the world and the things of it. If at any rate the desire of man's esteem be your idol, if you value your knowledge, learning, wealth, or other accomplishments, because of the income of worldly esteem they bring you in, not because of the glory you may bring to God, or the good you may do to men by them; if you sacrifice to the pride of life, and some way or other determine to be of *importance* as

well as you can, it is a manifest point that you are of the world.—But besides these there is still another question to be resolved. Are you, or are you not, renouncing the *men* of the world; that is, their customs and maxims, the influence of their example, and, in short, the whole authority which the usage of a wicked generation has established, and their manner of using the world and the things of it? Time will not permit me minutely to consider the several particulars comprehended under these heads; but the resolution of this single question shall serve to decide the whole, to wit, ‘Do we make the word of God or the ways of men the measure of our conduct?’ This will seem an absurd inquiry at first thought by those who, while they are living as others do, are at the same time professed readers and hearers of the Scriptures. “What! (will such say,) do you think we do not believe our Bibles; or that we are so stupid as to judge that to be right, though all the world should concur in saying it, which we hear God himself tell us to be wrong?” This, I confess, is talking well: but where is the corresponding practice? If you do not search the Scriptures really to know what the will of God is in every case, but are easily satisfied with ‘every body says so,’ and ‘every body does so,’ and think it very strange if any will not ‘do like the rest of the world,’ I beseech you, after all, what is this more than fine talking? The most of people go down with the current of the times, and take it for granted all is well, if they do not that which the world reckons ill. ‘It is scandalous;’ that and that alone is the measure

of forbearance; the world will not bear you out in what is scandalous. To be a drunkard, thief, whoremonger, is scandalous; upon such things the world has passed sentence, so you judge them very bad. To be liberal and decent, this the world countenances, and this you approve. But when a man denies himself, and begins to lead a heavenly life, ‘O it is too much!’ the world cries, and so you join in the cry. I pray you, what does all this prove, but that you live, think, and act upon the authority of a wicked world, and not upon the authority of God? Brethren, many now are the years that in the execution of my office I have been declaring to you the mind and will of God concerning you, and I verily think God can witness for me that I have not wittingly kept back or falsified any part of it through fear of disgusting and displeasing you. But now, what has been the fruit of this my much preaching, and your much hearing? Is it this, after all, that you are all living after your Bibles, and not after the ways of the world? Alas! it is not so; it is not so. Many, many of you join hand in hand, and keep each other in countenance in living directly contrary to your Bibles. And shall I need tell such (alas! they well know themselves) that they are wholly living after the world?

And now, my brethren, after this inquiry, is the report from every breast, what say we? ‘Are we of God, or are we of the world?’

If we are still of the world, I doubt not our consciences have been telling us so, while the point has been under examination. Every child of this world

here present has been testifying, and is now unavoidably testifying, against himself, 'I am not of God.' And will you consider what is implied in that testimony? Not of God! What can be more uncomfortable than that thought? Not of God! Then God is not *your* God; you have no interest in his almighty power, fatherly care, and pardoning grace. He does not regard you as a child; he has no provision for you in his family, he does not comfort you with his presence, you do not taste of his reviving communications, you are a forlorn creature, living in the world without God, without rest, without content, full of fears, big with anxieties, torn with disappointments; you seek Peace, but do you find her? you fly to Pleasure, but she dwells not there; you run to Company, but you cannot meet her; you say Wealth shall buy her for me, but you discover she is not to be purchased with gold. Do not you, children of this world, discern how unhappy you are in the midst of your all? But then what apprehensions beset you at the thought of death? When it does but threaten you, then what a terror possesses your spirits! You are at present miserable every day; yet, because ye dread being more so hereafter, you are willing to drag on in your chains. For, you sons of Care, you daughters of Pleasure, you that give yourselves up to the pride of learning and wealth, to the pomp of distinction and appearance, what are your prospects in death, and after death? What in the world of spirits? What, when the whole fabric of the world shall be dissolved in flames? What are they in the new heaven and

earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness? Could you persuade yourselves there is no sin in your choice, yet there would be infinite folly. For what folly equal to preferring a perishing world to an eternal God? But is there not sin in such a choice? Look at the glorious perfections of God, and say. Ask who made the world, and speak. Inquire why God gave you a being, and declare. Consider by whose bounty you live, and tell me. O, sirs! there is infinite sin in your choice, because infinite dishonour is done by it to God; and unless you are prevailed upon to make a better choice, you will soon find there is infinite ruin in it too. When the day of mercy and patience is over, then will you know what a fearful thing you have been doing in determinately and daily taking the world for your portion.

Wherefore let us all consider what a glorious privilege we are all called to, and as many as believe in Jesus Christ have an interest in, I mean that of having God for a portion. O what a heaven would this earth be were this the case of all! And how much of heaven does it bring down into the souls of those whose case it is! To have the all-sufficient, the living, the ever-present, the almighty, the eternal Being for our God, guarding us with his arm, guiding us with his hand, keeping us under his eye, directing all to us, and overruling all for us, dwelling among us, making us his care, conducting us through all the distressful passages of life, comforting us in a dying hour, receiving our souls to the nearest fellowship with himself in the moment of their separation, raising up and

glorifying these present houses of clay, forming a new habitation for us, whence sorrow, fear, and sin, shall be banished for ever! Who can describe the thousandth part of the blessedness there is in having God for a portion? I cannot. And yet I can say enough of it to load with the justest confusion all those who will have their portion in this world. And to think, my dear brethren, that God offers himself to us to be our God and portion; that at infinite expense he has opened the way through the blood of Jesus to his being so! To think that he is inviting us to it by all the endearments of love, and urging us to accept it by all the tender arguments of goodness, pity, and patience!—Sirs, I can only ask you if David speaks not the very truth, *Blessed are the people who have the Lord for their God?* O that we could all say with him, *Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I can desire besides thee!* I beseech you let us not rest till we can say that word with sincere hearts, to the glory of God, and to the present unspeakable comfort and future infinite happiness of our souls, through Jesus Christ our Lord.



## S E R M O N VI.

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ACTS xvi. 30.

*What must I do to be saved?*

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THE first and second parts of the baptismal renunciation having been explained, I am now to speak of the last part of it, the renouncing *all the sinful lusts of the flesh*.

And here also we will first explain, and afterwards improve.

*The flesh*.—By this is not meant man's body, which in itself considered is not sinful, any more than the natural appetites and passions thereof, which in themselves are good, and under due regulations serve to very good purposes. But by the flesh is understood the principle of sin that is in fallen man, very frequently called in Scripture by this name. It is that sinful principle in our nature contracted by Adam through his eating the forbidden fruit, and from him derived down to all who are naturally engendered of him.

*Lusts* of the flesh; that is, its desires, inclinations, imaginations, or affections.—The flesh is like some corrupt fountain that is always sending out bad water,

or it resembles a filthy carrion which gives forth continually its nauseous and poisonous stench. Just as the good nature of an angel is always bringing forth good motions and desires, so the evil nature of fallen creatures is as plentiful the contrary way, ceaselessly bursting out into bad and pernicious motions and lusts.

*Sinful* lusts of the flesh.—I have said that the necessary appetites of the body, such as hunger, thirst, and the like, are not sinful: but the lusts of corrupt nature are so, being directly contrary to God and duty, moving us only to sin, and the very immediate and principal causes of all actual sin in thought, word, and deed, when they are indulged and gratified.

*All* the sinful lusts of the flesh.—And they are exceeding many. In which regard the flesh is called the body of sin, because like the natural it has many members. Yet they are all reduced to two general heads by St. Paul, when he says, *Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit.* Where, by the filthiness of the flesh, he means all such lusts as are properly sensual; and by the filthiness of the spirit, all such lusts as are properly spiritual. The head of sensual lusts includes the several branches of uncleanness, intemperance, sloth, idleness, ease, pleasure, to all which sensual nature inclines us, and after all which it is perpetually lusting. The other head is spiritual filthiness, the sum of which in one word is pride, including self-sufficiency, conceit, self-will, impatience, unbelief, disobedience, covetousness, jealousy, envy, malice, revenge, cruelty, all

which are either pride itself or the genuine effects of it, and all of which together (covetousness only excepted, which is appropriate to man) do constitute the character of the devil, and are the real principles of all his conduct.

Now all these sensual and spiritual lusts being naturally in us, and actually having the whole direction of us, until by grace they are dethroned and brought into subjection, the true Christian knowing this, being advised of their sinfulness, being brought to hate and loathe them, and to long earnestly for an increasing freedom from their influence, and for a greater mortification of that principle of sin out of which they issue, doth in the strength of God declare his rejection of their dominion, his steadfast purpose to oppose and not to gratify their motions, and to use all possible means for weakening and crucifying their force and power, saying, *I renounce all the sinful lusts of the flesh.* Including in this expression the following declarations: “ I will no longer serve sin, neither  
“ will I yield my members as instruments of unrighte-  
“ ousness to it. I see and detest that accursed body  
“ of sin that dwelleth in me, I declare an irreconcila-  
“ ble war against it; too often have I followed the  
“ devices and desires of my own heart, I declare war  
“ against my natural self, I will be no more the willing  
“ ready slave of my sensual and spiritual lusts, by  
“ the help of God I will no more obey the brutal and  
“ devilish inclination of my most sinful nature; it  
“ shall be my endeavour to watch and to oppose their  
“ every motion; if by force they gain advantage they

“ shall not maintain it, and since I know them to be  
“ crafty I will labour to find them out, and, when I  
“ see, I will not spare them; I will not hearken to  
“ their importunities, I will not be tired out by the  
“ frequency and obstinacy of their pleadings, I will  
“ not yield to their cry, be what they contend for of  
“ never so great importance to my present interest,  
“ ease, or reputation, and if what they ask be never  
“ so little, I will not grant it. They will, I know,  
“ have an influence in all I think, say, and do; but  
“ I will endeavour, by the grace of God, it shall be  
“ less and less. I fear and expect they will many  
“ times gain incidental advantages over me, but, in  
“ the might of Jesus, they shall not have possession:  
“ I renounce them all. I will no longer seek to  
“ please and gratify my carnal proud self; no longer  
“ will I give myself up to my sensual inclinations in  
“ a life of uncleanness, intemperance, sloth, idleness,  
“ ease, or pleasure; neither any more will I indulge  
“ to pride, to direct my conduct on the hellish prin-  
“ ciples of conceit and self-will, anger and resentment,  
“ malice and envy, revenge and cruelty, the praise  
“ of men and the pride of life. Such a conduct, both  
“ sensual and proud, I absolutely disclaim; all the  
“ motions of my depraved heart that would lead me  
“ thereto I will resist; and that body of sin, out of  
“ which such evil motions perpetually arise, I will  
“ pursue unto the death. And all this, and what-  
“ ever else is implied in hating, rejecting, fighting  
“ against, and crucifying the flesh with its affections  
“ and lusts, I do intend and desire, and purpose and

“ promise to perform, when I say, I renounce all the  
“ sinful lusts of the flesh.”

Let this suffice for the explanation; and let us pass on to the improvement.

And here let us make inquiry,

“ Are we living in the outward practice of any of  
“ these lusts of the flesh?” I say, *of any of them*, because you see our profession is to renounce them all. Are we living none of us in the outward indulgence of any *sensual* lusts? I have shewn you what is meant by sensual lusts, namely, uncleanness, intemperance, sloth, idleness, ease, and pleasure. Are we living none of us in any of the sins of *uncleanness*? These for the most part are secret sins, and such as, if known at any time, are *chiefly* discovered by their effects, which oftentimes bring many to public shame, and more often others to noisome diseases that will not be concealed. While also there are kinds and degrees of this sin which can only be known to God and a man’s own conscience, so closely are they kept from observation. But God knows all their practices; and all such persons also know in their consciences that he holds them guilty, and that they are the servants of lust. But other sins are not so hid. Let me then inquire further, Are none of us living in *intemperance*? Intemperance especially relates to gluttony and drunkenness. Are we not living in gluttony? Certainly there is such a sin as intemperance in meat. And if we are grown nice and delicate, if the plain food of our fathers disgusts us, if we are for elegant dishes beyond what we can afford, or, though we

can afford them, if we indulge our thoughts in expecting them, and our palates in using them immoderately; more especially if any of us are so careful to feed our bellies that we let our backs go without a covering, and, if we like a thing, are resolved to have it without caring what it costs us, it is very evident we cannot clear ourselves of the sin of gluttony. And then, as to drunkenness, how are so many alehouses maintained, how are so many families ruined and brought to live on the public by frequenting them, how are there so many nightly clubs, how is so much precious time spent in places prepared for the purpose, and how are so many grown old before they have attained half their days, if there be no such thing as drunkenness among us? But do we know that *sloth* and *idleness*, *ease* and *pleasure* (for, that I may not be tedious, I put them together), are also sensual lusts? and that to live in the practice of them is as much a life of indulgence as if we were to give ourselves up to the grosser sins of lewdness or intemperance? Surely we know it not, else many would not be content to live in them as they do. For what is the life of many but a mere continuation of doing nothing, because they seem to themselves to have nothing to do, and there is not precisely any thing much amiss in what they do, therefore all were well? But, brethren, to sleep away days and weeks, and months and years, in sauntering, chatting, and visiting, in parties of pleasure abroad, and insignificance at home, however it may appear harmless in the eye of the world, will pass for no better than sensuality

in the eyes of God. But to go on from sensual indulgences in the outward conduct to spiritual. Are we none of us in the outward indulgence of *spiritual* lusts? What I mean by the outward indulgence of them is their habitual direction of our behaviour in the world. Wherefore, if you are carried along by conceit and self-opinion in your conversations and conduct, if you are self-willed, rash, and overbearing, if your behaviour be planned upon the calculation of exalting and maintaining your name in the world; if in your demeanour you endeavour to make every one think you a person of *merit and importance*; if you will bear no contradiction, but treat all with anger and resentment who do not conform to your ways; if, finally, you live for yourself, and none are the better for you any further than they serve to gratify your humours, or to promote your interests; if any of this be your outward conduct, all who know you are witnessing against you that you are under the influence of unmortified pride. They see it in your whole conduct, though you perhaps suspect it not. And if you will not see, if you will not consider what you do, nor examine into the principles upon which you act, it cannot be wondered if, while all about you know you to be a slave, you alone suspect nothing of the matter. You can see and complain of the pride that reigns in the conduct of others; their self-seeking, self-will, impatience, conceit, and setting themselves off, as they do, render them intolerable to you. You wonder no one tells them of it, you admire they do not see it themselves, while, in the mean time, you are looking upon your own picture,

not in the least imagining it to be yours, or that it is any thing like you. Yet methinks there are some circumstances in a proud character and carriage, that you must be wilfully blind if you do not see them in yourself, while every day you are acting them over. What can you think if in all companies you are industriously and artfully setting yourself, your abilities, gifts, or possessions, out to view? or what, if you can bear no contradiction, but all must be and do as you would have them in every trifle? What, if every thing and nothing puts you in a passion, and if you break every tie of duty to gratify resentment? What, if everywhere and at all seasons you become all things to all men, that you may gain their praise and esteem? Surely a conduct like this speaks plainly enough; and if you do not understand that you are serving your spiritual, or, in another word, your devilish lusts, it is even because you will not.

But from the outward practice of any of these lusts let us pass to the inward. For I would not have you deceived. And I know there were of old, and that there are still Pharisees in the world, who contrive to keep the outside tolerably clean, at least in their judgment of the matter, while all is defilement within. Now therefore, my dear friends, however it appear without, how is it in truth within? Are we there renouncing all the sinful lusts of the flesh? It is an easy matter to say I do; and for the most part they will be most forward to say they do, who are the greatest strangers to the doing so. Wherefore I will propose to you certain questions, whereby you may certainly know whether you be or not re-



nouncing all the sinful lusts of the flesh by a true opposition made to them in your heart. *First*, Have you found out that there are such sensual and devilish lusts in you? If you have not, it is plain you cannot be rejecting and resisting them; and if you will still say I renounce all the sinful lusts of the flesh, when you know not you have any sinful lusts within you, you make it evident that you can mean even nothing by what you say. And accordingly, when you are told that such lusts dwell in you, that you are every one of you sensual, prone to every kind and degree of uncleanness, intemperance, and carnality, so that you are naturally ready for the very grossest impurities; when you are told that you are also full of every spiritual lust, that your natural heart is a sink of pride, conceit, envy, malice, revenge, cruelty, and every devilish lust; I say, when you are told of this, are you not ready to cry out in indignation, "What! .I? I defy the world; and I will have you to know " I am not such a beast and such a devil as you make " me." Well, then, you profess and openly avow you have not such sensual and devilish lusts in you; so it is past dispute you cannot be renouncing them. O what a lamentable ignorance is there in this Christian country of the fall of man! Every child owns by rote that we are born in sin; but, for any real knowledge of the sinfulness of the heart, not one of a thousand has the least suspicion of any such thing. And yet it is most certain that the knowledge of this is the only groundwork of being in the practice of Christianity.—But you say you do know this, you are fully

sensible that all these sensual and spiritual lusts which I have been describing dwell in you, for you find them always at work, and can by experience testify this Scripture to be true, *that every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart is only evil continually.*— In this case, I ask, *Secondly*, Do you really hate and long to be delivered from them all, whatever they be? This St. Paul certainly did, for he cries, in the sense of his hidden lusts, *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?* Look at your sensual lusts, and look at your spiritual lusts; look especially at that lust, the indulgence of which is most convenient for you, which you cannot deny without peculiar suffering, which is the very idol of your natural heart, and try if you can say, calling God to witness, “ This I hate, even this I long to be delivered from, with this I would not make the least compliance for his name's sake.” If you can truly say this, concerning every kind of pride, and every kind of sensuality, not cherishing or approving iniquity in your heart, it is manifest that you have the love of God in you, and in the choice of your heart are rejecting all evil ways. But if you only know that you have many lusts of the flesh in you; if, notwithstanding this knowledge, they be not your burden and your grief; if pride or passion, if resentment or vanity, carry you away, and you take little thought of the matter, are speedily reconciled to yourself, and soon forget it as if nothing had been amiss, it is not conceivable how you can hate the lusts of your flesh. Now if you judge you have a comfortable

answer in this respect also, I go on, for (preventing mistakes in some, and confirming in others the confidence of God's grace working effectually in them) to ask, *Thirdly*, Whether your views of the lusts of the flesh are so humbling, that while they bring you to the blood of Christ for remission of the guilt of them, they also bring you to sue with importunity for the Spirit to deliver you from the power of them, and to mortify them in you continually? You do not see your lusts in such a hateful light as shall dispose you to renounce them, unless they bring you thus to the blood and grace of Christ, and that with a suitable importunity. It is the sight of the holiness of God that can alone make any one hate sin within him, and when it does this he sees himself so defiled by it that he cannot think of standing before God but in the righteousness of Christ, while also he will be earnestly calling upon God to deliver him from the detestable power of it. Wherefore, however much you may seem to hate your lusts (and without hating them you cannot renounce them), yet still you are deceived, if they do not bring you on your knees, and cause you to cry frequently and earnestly for forgiveness of them, and for grace against them. Surely you cannot think you are humbled for that which you do not ask the pardon of, or that you hate that you do not pray to be set free from. So that if the deep sense of the sinful lusts of your flesh do not lie at the bottom of your prayers, as the very foundation-stone of all your entreaties for pardon, and all your cries for grace, you only pray in formality,

and are neither hating nor renouncing them. But if you say you do thus pray against them, I ask yet, *Fourthly*, Whether you are actually in the strength prayed for fighting against them? It is this which proves the truth of the whole. Are you actually at war with your hidden lusts? I do not ask, take notice, whether the victory is always on your side: but I ask, whether you be really at war with them? Doubtless you ought to watch and strive that at no time they gain advantage of you. But when they have, do you suffer them to keep it? There lies the point. If they have thrust themselves in unawares, watching an opportunity, and by-and-by you thrust them again as those you will not entertain in your house, it is plain they came in like thieves, and have no right as masters. But now if you give them entertainment, and suffer them to dwell quietly with you; you will never be able to persuade yourself, and much less God, that you hold them as enemies. The main question therefore is, are we at actual war with our lusts? If not, in the very nature of the thing, they have necessarily the dominion over us, for they are by nature in possession: and, consequently, let us seem to hate them and seem to pray against them never so much, in truth we do not the one nor the other, but love and entertain them at the bottom, although in the apprehensions of God's wrath against us we may in a selfish way wish to be rid of them.

By this time I would hope we are all come to some conclusion, whether or no we are renouncing all the sinful lusts of the flesh. In the examination of this

interesting point I have been the more particular, both that they who are serving their lusts might have no pretence for ignorance that they are doing so, and that they who are set at liberty from them might rejoice and praise God for their deliverance.

We will conclude with this one thought, which is suited to alarm the one and quicken the other of you, namely, there is an infinite sinfulness in the lusts of our flesh, whether *sensual* or *spiritual*, because they lead in a direct opposition to God, *that* as a portion, *this* as a master. Sensuality says, indulgence is a better happiness for me than God; and Pride cries, it is better to be one's own master than to serve the Most High. But what dishonour is done to God by so base a preference! What, do we set God so very low in our estimation, that we reckon the poor indulgences of brute creatures, to eat, and drink, and play, preferable to the favour, the presence, the joy of communion with the Ever-Blessed! And do we treat God as such a tyrant that we cannot endure his laws? and, holding his service intolerable, do we set up for ourselves? O, sirs! the angels above do not thus think of God. How infinite is their joy in beholding his face! how unmeasurable their pleasure in fulfilling his commandments, hearkening to the voice of his words! What infinite evil is there not in this carnal, this spiritual lust? My dear brethren, we shall be all fully sensible of it another day. Will not that soul feel it in the bottom of hell, who would not quit his beloved lusts? In the bitterness of his spirit he will cry, "There is no hope in God now, and without

“ God what horror ! I feel, I feel what it is to be  
“ without God.” And the converted saint, exalted  
to the highest heaven, when he knows and falls down  
in ravishing wonder before the Majesty of God, what  
will he think of pride ? when he enjoys the everlast-  
ing pleasures at God’s right hand, what will he think  
of carnal gratifications ? But God and sin are the very  
same now that they will be hereafter. O that we  
would be wise, that we would consider our latter end !  
God give us all grace effectually and more abundantly  
to do so for his mercy’s sake towards us in Jesus  
Christ our Lord.

## S E R M O N VII.

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ACTS xvi. 30, 31.

*What must I do to be saved? And they said, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.*

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WE have already treated of the first branch of the baptismal vow, namely, the renunciation of the devil, the world, and the flesh; and pass on now to the second part of it, faith. What this faith is, its necessity unto salvation, and the sure promise of mercy made unto it, are plainly marked out in the question made by the jailer, and the answer given him by Paul and Silas, when he asks them, *What he must do to be saved?* They have but one answer to give him, which is, that he must *believe on the Lord Jesus Christ*. This was the only way, and it was sufficient; if he did this, *he should be saved*. True faith in Jesus Christ, that is, such a faith as engages to die unto sin and to live unto God, is the faith here intended. But we are here to consider it in its nature, and not in its effects of renunciation and obedience, the former of which has been already spoken to, as the latter will be in its proper place.

Introductory to a particular explication of the Creed

in its several parts, it will be proper, *First*, to lay before you in one view the whole subject-matter of this little, but excellent, summary of Christian principles. *Secondly*, What is the true nature of faith concerning them.

*First*.—What is the subject-matter of the Apostles' Creed? Now the faith in question being plainly divine faith, inasmuch as it is purely conversant about God and things of a spiritual nature; and this divine faith being also Christian faith, it must needs be, that that Creed, which contains the articles of this faith, hath regard unto God, in the Mediator Christ Jesus. For which reason, the whole of the Christian faith is often expressed in the Scripture by the single phrase, *believing in the Lord Jesus Christ*; because in him it is that God presents himself unto us in Scripture as the object of our faith and hope. These articles therefore do not relate to God absolutely, but to God in Christ; for God, absolutely considered, is not set forth as the object of faith to us sinners; such indeed he is to angels, and to perfect creatures that never sinned, but he is not a God to us otherwise than through a Redeemer. So that the substance of the Creed is God, as a covenant-God in Christ; consequently, to believe the articles of the Christian faith, is to believe in the one God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as in the respective offices of the three divine Persons he stands related to us in the Mediator; in the Father, the Maker of all things, as a Father to us; in the Son, as the Redeemer; in the Holy Ghost, as the Sanctifier; and all in and through Jesus Christ;



in whom the living members of his body the church, we are assured, have fellowship and communion with this ever-blessed God as their God, and therewith present forgiveness of sins in this life, and an assured title to a glorious resurrection, and an everlasting life hereafter. In short, as without a Mediator we have no relation to God but that of children of wrath, so in Christ he is a God unto us for time and for eternity.

Take notice, therefore, that whosoever repeats this Creed, as the profession of his faith, does thereby virtually declare, that he steadfastly believes himself, otherwise than in Christ, an alien and an outcast from God, a child of wrath, and an heir of hell; and that it is no otherwise than in Jesus Christ, and for his sake, that he has the least confidence to call God his God, or the least hope of forgiveness of his sins in this life, and of happiness in the life which is to come. Now, brethren, do we seriously mean this when we repeat the Creed? If we do not, we either speak without any meaning or distinct thought at all, when we say over these words (which no doubt is too frequently the case); or else if we do repeat the words, under any knowledge of the sense of them, we do it for decency's sake, to conform to the customary modes of worship in the country where we live, though in reality we believe nothing of the matter. In this case, we do no better than lie unto God. How can we do so more solemnly, and with more sin, than when in his public worship we avow that with our mouths which we disavow with our hearts? And

yet there are some who will contend, "God will not damn any of his creatures," as they affect to phrase it, the better to colour over a flat denial of the whole doctrines of the Gospel, and a determined purpose of continuing in an impenitent state. There are others who insist, if a man be honest and civil, and charitable to the poor, it matters not what his sentiments are about religion; for with such a man all shall be well. How contrary these tenets are to the Christian scheme of salvation contained in the Creed, every one sees; as also no one can help seeing what a gross absurdity, not to say impiety, is expressed in their conduct, who, while they hold such antichristian tenets, do nevertheless appear in Christian assemblies, and by their repetition of the Creed, in common with the congregation, publicly declare (for this is the very design of every man's reciting the Creed) that they steadfastly believe there is no salvation out of Jesus Christ; and that the wrath of God, under which all are born, abideth on him who believeth not on the Son of God.

From the subject-matter of the Creed, as it has been now set forth, I cannot but observe further, how the doctrine of the Trinity is fully contained in it, which is particularly observed by the compilers of the Catechism as what is chiefly to be learnt in these articles of belief; "I learn to believe in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost," ascribing to each his respective office. Now if, by reciting the Creed publicly in the congregation, we profess to believe a trinity of persons in the Godhead; and if,

at the same time, as was just now shewn, we do thereby also profess to believe that there is salvation in none other but Jesus Christ, then what reason can they who recite this Creed assign for their refusing to join in that which is commonly called the Creed of Athanasius? This latter Creed is, as to the matter of it, in substance the very same with the former; the doctrine of the Trinity, and the one only way of salvation by Jesus Christ, are not a jot more in the one than the other: and whoever recites the Apostles' Creed does by so doing declare himself satisfied with every tittle contained in the Creed of Athanasius, the damnatory clauses not excepted: for when, by reciting the Apostles' Creed, he declares that there is but one way of salvation, he of necessity consents that whoever do not hold that way shall undoubtedly and everlastingly perish: so that, after all the clamour raised against the Creed of Athanasius, nothing lies against it which does not equally lie against the Apostles' Creed. And, in truth, the cry for having it laid aside arises from nothing else but a disbelief of the grand doctrines of the Gospel, that of the Trinity, and that of salvation by Jesus Christ only; points which do not at all suit with the pride of an unhumiliated heart, and which therefore are wished to be taken out of the church; but which, whatever Creeds should be rejected or used, cannot be laid aside without striking out the very being of Christianity, and leaving Christ utterly out of what in that case would be falsely called his church. But,

*Secondly.*—What is the true nature of faith con-

cerning these articles? In explaining this matter I shall need your attention, while I observe,

1.—What is the nature of faith or believing in general? And this is, assenting to a thing as true, upon the report and testimony of others. What I see with my own eyes, what is made out to me upon the evidence of my own senses, I am not said to *believe*, but to *know*. Believing comes another way; and is my assent gained by being told a thing by others. A person of this place being in the neighbourhood, and seeing a house on fire, knows it; when he comes and informs us of it, we believe it; both he and we assent to the thing, that the house is on fire; but then, he because he saw it, we because he told us of it. The one, upon knowledge; the other, by faith.

2.—The only ground, therefore, of belief, is testimony. In which testimony two things are necessary to gain our assent to what is told us; the first, that we think the person testifying a capable judge of the fact he relates; the second, that we are satisfied he is honest in the relation he makes of it. Were a person out of his senses, or a notorious liar, to tell you he saw such and such a thing, your assent would be either absolutely refused, or, at most, go no further than a suspicion that the thing might perhaps be. But did a person whom you judged a capable observer, and an honest relater, assure you of it, you would not withhold your assent.

3.—The testimony upon which you give assent is different, according to the nature of the things testified of. Things human we assent to upon the testi-

mony of man, if competent and faithful; but things divine we cannot assent to upon man's testimony (because the things of God no man knoweth), but upon the testimony of God. Wherefore, though human testimony may well beget human faith, that is, belief concerning human things; yet human testimony cannot beget divine faith, that is, belief of divine things. Man cannot know the things of God any further than he is told them by God himself, one way or other; so that divine faith stands simply upon divine testimony.

4.—Human testimony being no ground of divine faith, therefore there is in the world what is called by that name, and is not; as also there is what is called divine faith, and is so. There is in the world what is called divine faith, yet is not so, being what is taken up upon man's testimony. And this is the faith that is common in the world. The most believe the Scriptures, not from any real discernment that they are truly the record of God, but on no other footing than because they are currently received as such in the country and church in which they were born and bred; just as the Turks believe the Alcoran to be a divine book, because every one about them says it is from God. This every sensible person sees to be mere prejudice, and which sets Christianity on that very footing, upon which all the various things that are called religion, throughout the divers nations of the world, may be alike justified; since all they, as well as we, can say, it is the religion of my country, and all say it is the true religion. But possibly, though

the absurdity be glaring, yet the true cause of such a false faith may not have been enough attended to, namely, the standing upon the incompetent testimony of man for the belief of divine things; and in the want of such a consideration, many, who have seen the absurdity of believing thus upon custom, may have run upon an absurdity not a jot less glaring, by taking it for granted there was no truth in Christianity, because the most of those who profess it are capable of giving no better a reason for their doing so. But,

5.—Besides this vulgar prejudice, misnamed faith, as standing only on man's testimony, there is also true faith, standing on the testimony of God. And this is the faith here in question, the true saving faith, to which all the promises of the Gospel belong. Concerning this saving faith, four things must be noted, as abundantly sufficient to distinguish it from whatever else is called faith. (1.) The subject, or person, in whom it is wrought, an humbled sinner. The promises of the Gospel are absolutely confined to the humble; so that neither he who is not brought to a sense of his lost estate as a sinner, nor even he who, awakened to a sense of his ruinous condition, is only desirous that he may not perish, can be the subject of this faith; but he who, besides seeing his danger, is convinced of the evil of his sins against the blessed God, their heinous guilt and deep demerit, and earnestly longs after reconciliation with him; who, in opposition to the unawakened, knows himself to be a sinner; and, in opposition to the only awakened, not

alone desires to escape hell, and go to heaven, from a mere selfish regard to his own happiness, but rather desires the approbation, favour, and love of God, as his chief good; this is the only person in whom this saving faith is ever wrought. (2.) The object, or the thing believed by this humbled soul, which is the promise, God in Christ, holding himself out to the sinner by and in the promise. God in Christ is the object upon which faith fastens; none other can satisfy the humbled soul's occasions, nor in any sort fill up its desires. It is no true faith if Christ be not the supreme object of the soul's desire; if there be a looking to other than him for hope or happiness. (3.) Besides the subject and the object, there is the testimony of God unto the promise, making out the truth of it to the humbled soul. The promise lies in the Scripture, which the Spirit opens and explains to the mind by his secret illuminations, in answer to the soul's inquiry, search, and prayer; making it plainer and plainer; shewing the suitableness of it to God's glory, and the soul's necessities; answering and silencing objections to the truth of it, and gaining a belief of it in the soul upon the authority of a faithful God, who cannot lie, and will not change. The testimony here is as immediately and directly God's, as a man's testimony to what he declares is his. And this God's testimony is not made out by any new revelation to the soul (that being merely an enthusiastical fancy, and a very dangerous opinion), but by casting light upon the promise, explaining it, and making it out in the mind by a rational discovery of

the evidences upon which it stands, as they lie in the Scripture. Upon this follows, in the fourth place, the assent, which is always in proportion to the degree of clearness wherewith the divine testimony is made in the soul. But wherever it is gained in any degree it is saving, having the very same effects in kind, though not in degree, as when it is grown up to absolute assurance past all doubt; and particularly warring against the fear of God's wrath, from a sense of guilt and unworthiness, which is the most proper office and business of faith. Having shewn you now what the true nature of faith is, I would observe,

6.—That, according to the account given of it, it must needs admit of the division into weak and strong. The belief is in proportion to the testimony, which the Spirit may give with a convincing fulness all at once, if he pleases, as it looks as if he did in the case of St. Paul: but it appears by the Bereans that this is not always the case; for it is said of them, that *they searched the Scriptures daily whether these things were so*; whereby it is manifestly implied, that God's testimony was not given them all at once in its satisfying fulness and incontestable evidence. And experience shews that this is ordinarily the case, as is most reasonable it should, to excite our care, diligence, prayer, and meditation, for increase in this great gift of God. God's testimony lies in the Scripture, to which we cannot assent any further than we know it. But this Scripture-testimony is of large extent and scope, in a competent knowledge of all which the mind must be instructed before it can attain unto



such an assent as will admit of no doubt. And although it be the Spirit which makes out this Scripture-testimony, yet there is no reason to expect he will do it, but increasingly, in correspondence with our searching the Scriptures, and in answer to our prayers.

And therefore, to conclude, let me address a word of advice for the increase of faith.

*First.*—We should be abundantly diligent in humbling ourselves before God for our manifold and daily sins and provocations; this is our duty; but the effect of it, in regard of increase of faith, is manifest, inasmuch as such exercises keep the soul awake to see its real vileness and utter want of Christ, and thereby preserve and increase its longings and desires after him. This experience teaches; as we remit or are diligent in these exercises, we are cold or earnest after Christ.

*Secondly.*—We must hear, read, and meditate on the Scriptures, in a dependence on divine illumination to make out to us from them more evidently God's testimony concerning his Son Jesus Christ. God's word must be our study as often as we can; and, when it is not, we must be recollecting what we have learnt from it, and pondering upon it on all occasions; else, as I may say, we do not give the Spirit opportunity to explain and fix on our minds the testimony of God.

*Thirdly.*—We must use the faith we have. This is a special means of increase. *Behold, he giveth more grace.* Stir up your faith to oppose all sinful fears;

keep it in exercise upon God as he appears in his glorious majesty, and mercy in Jesus Christ. Lose not the sight of the great Redeemer, seated, as he now is, at the right hand of the Majesty on high, and manifested, as he will soon be, in the clouds of heaven. Let your faith in the divine promises, such as it is, be constantly kept at work in opposing the whole body of sin, and the special lusts thereof. Stir yourself up unto every duty. See that faith have the chief place in all you do, and in all your approaches unto God. See that your faith be working, and you will find God giving you increase.

*Lastly.*—Be thankfully observant of God's faithfulness to his promises in Jesus Christ, manifest in his gracious daily dealings with you in soul and body. Compare his dealings with his declarations. Through grace it will wonderfully confirm you to see how they agree. How, as he has said, he hears your prayers; does not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able; heals your backslidings; corrects you in measure; comforts you in all your tribulations. O, my friends! to see by long experience from of old how he has carried us in his hand, and still to this day has not left nor forsaken us; how through his mercies we are not consumed, and still his compassions fail not; to see how his mercies are new to us every morning; and every day he blesses us according to his word, in body, that we live and have health, and every thing needful, and every thing convenient, and every comfortable thing, as it is this day; in soul he keeps us, preventing us with gracious motions, up-

holding us against our enemies, stirring us up to good, and preserving us from sin. What shall we say to these things? Were the mercies of God but one day duly remembered, how should we be forced to own the faithfulness of God, and the merits of Jesus Christ! The Lord enable you so to do, to the increase of your faith and joy, and of his praise and glory through Jesus Christ.

## S E R M O N VIII.

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ACTS xvi. 30, 31.

*What must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.*

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YOU have had the nature of divine faith laid before you, and it was seen to be believing upon divine testimony, which testimony lies in the holy Scriptures, and is made out from them by the Spirit.

I am now to speak of the object of this divine faith, which is God, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. And at present more generally of the divine nature, *I believe in God.* And here we must inquire,

I.—What God is.

II.—What it is to believe in him.

I.—What God is.—God is a *Spirit*. I have no comprehension of what I say when I call God a Spirit, because I am quite a stranger to the nature of Spirit; but when I say, God is a Spirit, I mean hereby that he is quite contrary to body, that he has neither eyes, nor hands, nor other bodily members, like myself; but that he is something to which my reasonable soul is not absolutely unlike, of which I know that it has certain powers of understanding and willing,

though I have not the least notion what the substance of it is. This Spirit is a *living* Spirit; all creatures, whether spiritual or visible, have their life from other, even from him; he has his life from none. *I am* is his name; he hath life in himself; and all creatures in heaven, hell, and earth, as at first they received their life from him, so every moment do they live and subsist by him. God is life in himself, and therefore life in all. This living Spirit is *infinite*; he is not limited by place or time, as creatures are, who can only be at one certain place, and who subsist by succession of time. Of them all it must be said, they are here in this place, and nowhere else; they had at such a time a beginning, still they are, and the future, when it comes, shall make addition to their days: but of God it is said, he is everywhere at once, yet not a part of him here, and another part of him ten millions of miles on the other side the sun, but inconceivably everywhere at once in his whole essence. The heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain him. As also it must be said of God, he is eternal; he knows neither beginning, nor end; neither past, nor to come. Time is no measure of his existence; he was, or he will be, cannot be applied to his life. There is no conceiving the manner of his existing, nor hardly power in language to express what it is not. He lives without succession; and therefore, were it not improper to apply terms expressive of time to his life, you might invert the order of past and to come, and as well say, he will be from everlasting, he hath been to everlasting, as he hath been and will

be, since time is not the measure of his being. He is *almighty*; he can do what he pleases. He hath done whatever is. With him the power is as easy as the will. What he wills he does, and that without the least difficulty, even as if to will and to do were the same act. When he said in his heart, Let worlds be, all came forth into being with infinitely greater ease than you move your finger. When he wills again, heaven and earth, with all their furniture, shall pass away; and, at a third command, a new heaven and a new earth shall rise up in their place. He is *blessed*; infinitely happy in himself, incapable of addition or diminution to his happiness. The malice or misery of devils do not take from, the glory and services of angels do not add to, his happiness. Considered in his moral character, as governing the world, he is *holy, just, and good*. All his commands are holy and right, resulting not from an arbitrary exercise of power, but from his own excellency and supremacy, and our dependence upon him. All his dispensations are just and equal; there is no unrighteousness in any thing that he does; they who serve him shall not be forsaken by him, and they who suffer have but their deserts. Both his commands and his dispensations display his goodness and good will towards us, as the one and the other tend to the happiness of his creatures. To obey his orders is liberty, to enjoy his favour is life. His afflictions are calculated to reclaim, his greatest judgments are suited to warn others; and, seeing sin and misery are inseparable, his greatest judgments, those that are eternal,

have a tendency to the general good of his subjects, by forcing some to return from their evil ways, lest they perish after the example of others. Finally, God is *unchangeable*. Respecting his natural perfections, he must be so by the excellency and necessity of his nature; he cannot cease from being a living, omnipresent, eternal, almighty, blessed God, without ceasing to be God. And, in his moral character, he is incapable of change, because of his infinite wisdom, whereby he adjusts all things at once by weight and measure, without possibility of mistake, or need of alteration. His determinations are ordered in all things and sure, and therefore they stand fast for ever. Let this suffice for the first point, what God is.

II.—What it is to believe in him. There is a wide difference between believing that God is, and believing in him. The latter includes (which the former does not) a proper disposition of the heart towards him as God. Angels in heaven believe that God is, and also believe in him by a right disposition of heart towards him. So did Adam in innocence. But devils, though they believe God is, yet have no belief in him; and the sons of men, in the sinful state into which we are fallen, though they should believe God to be every thing that he is, yet cannot believe in him, but in that peculiar way by which he offers himself to them as their God. For the explaining of this, three things must be observed, as being implied in this first article of Christian faith, “I believe in God.”

1.—It implies a believing God to be what he is. For it is impossible to be disposed to God in love,

trust, and service, or, which is the same thing, to believe in him, any further than he is believed to be that excellent Being who has a right to our hearts, and, by his all-sufficiency, is able to support the claim he makes upon our affections. *He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of all them that diligently seek him.* Where, although it is manifest that believing that such a Being as God is can have no influence to engage and encourage us sinners to come unto him, unless also we believe that he is a gracious rewarder of those who seek him; yet, on the other hand, believing that God is the Being that he is, is the necessary foundation of the other; since it is only in proportion to that, that either his judgments or rewards can have any influence upon us. So that manifestly to believe in God implies a believing that he is what he is. Now it is evident that the most of men in fact, and it is certain all men by nature, do not believe God to be what he is; living incontestably without him in the world; his being, perfections, and majesty, not having the least practical influence upon them, which plainly shews that they have not in them any real belief that God is such a Being as he is. Devils believe, and in consequence thereof tremble; but they who lie dead in trespasses and sins, utterly unawakened and unconcerned about their state, are absolutely atheists; for they tremble not, and yet as well as devils would tremble, did they believe that God is the Being that he is, and in common with them they must tremble sooner or later, when they shall



be made to know that there is a God that judgeth the earth : but, for the present, their hearts are so engaged by the things of the world, and their eyes are so blinded by the god of the world, that there is no belief in them that such a Being as God is. But how is this, when it is so commonly said, there is no such thing as an atheist in the world, and, in proof of that, it is alleged, that the most hardened sinner in it is afraid of death ? My answer is, may not a man be afraid of death, without having any fear of God ? But it is urged further, he is afraid too of what comes after death. This I greatly question, and almost venture to deny, if the man has never been awakened. I am sensible that the traditionary knowledge there is of God left in the world, and handed down from one to another, is sufficient to raise suspicions, and to beget a doubtful apprehension in the foresight of death upon the minds of those who do not believe in reality that God is what he is ; as also I am sensible, that this traditionary knowledge is capable of being so reasoned upon by learned men, as to produce in them a seemingly strong assent to the truth of God's being and perfections ; the reality of which I must question, since it begets in them no fear of God, or at least no other than is common to them with others ; a superstitious fear, grounded on the vulgar opinion that there is a God : but this fear of death or judgment can by no means prove that a man really believes God to be what he is, when his hardness, obstinacy, and wilfulness, so evidently prove the contrary ; it being, I conceive, unquestionable, that what we really believe

we are necessarily affected by in proportion to the importance which that truth is of unto us ; consequently they, who are not moved by fear to seek after the salvation of their souls, have no real belief that God is what he is, though, through the opinion concerning him that prevails in the world, they may be unable to deny it, and so may not be without their apprehensions. There is need, therefore, of a divine illumination to induce a man to believe that God is what he is : and when from the works of nature or Providence the being and perfections of God are made out in the heart, and a firm assent is gained, then the sinner sees God indeed ; but at first he sees him as a consuming fire. What comfort can he take in an everlasting, almighty, omnipresent enemy ? Were God his friend, what could equal his happiness ? To be kept by an almighty arm, to be guided by unerring wisdom, to stand in the favour of divine Majesty and absolute sufficiency ; this were glorious ! But to look upon him as an enemy and avenger ! In this view, every infinite perfection of God makes the wretchedness so much more abundantly deplorable. But out of this state of distress our professor is supposed to be passed. He says, “ I believe that God “ is every thing that he is,” not with the terror of a slave, but with the comfort of a child, who regards what is his father’s as having an interest therein. “ I “ believe that God is ; that he liveth omnipresent “ and eternal ; that his power is boundless ; that he “ is holy, just, and good ; and my joy it is that he “ is what he is, though I have sinned against him,

“ and have deserved his indignation. Now I can look  
“ upon him with delight in all his perfectness, and  
“ because he is all-perfect; in his perfection lies all  
“ my safety and all my happiness.” In short; though  
a real belief that God (apprehended according to the  
truth of his being), namely, just and righteous, is,  
fills the awakened soul with fear, yet; when the belief  
of God’s mercy in Jesus Christ is added thereunto,  
it fills the believing soul with comfort. And therefore,

2.—In this article, “ I believe in God,” is implied  
a belief of the Gospel, that God is reconciled in Jesus  
Christ. And this is what makes the belief of God an  
article of Christian faith. Without a Mediator, there  
is a great impassable gulf between a holy Governor of  
the world and a rebellious creature. God stands off on  
one side, and man dares not draw near on the other.  
But, when Jesus comes in between, the breach is  
healed, the intercourse is opened; God offers himself  
to the sinner; and he, encouraged by the promise,  
and laying hold on the righteousness of Christ, says  
unto the Lord, *Thou art my God.* Whatever belief  
any one may have of God, that he is every thing glo-  
rious, excellent, and desirable, yet, considering him  
absolutely, he not only may not, but even he dares  
not, come near him with confidence; sin, guilt, and  
the curse of the law, forbid. It is to a covenant-God  
only that there is access, it is through Christ only  
that we come unto the Father. If any presume to  
come otherwise, they have no command or other war-  
rant to bear them out; they come in ignorant and  
arrogant security, not sensible that they are sinful,

guilty, and miserable creatures; and let them not think (whatever their confidence be) that they are accepted with God. Indeed, unless inexpressibly deluded, they can have no confidence in God. His terrors will make them afraid, because they have that within them which tells them they are sinners, and is continually crying out, How canst thou stand before this holy Lord God? But, not to insist on this, the article before us is *Christian*, stands at the head of all the articles of our most holy faith, is the key unto and the substance of them all; and therefore must needs have reference unto Christ, as that only Saviour by and through whom we believe in God.

3.—“ I believe in God” not only implies our believing that God is what he is; and again, our believing that he is reconciled in Christ, but also our accepting him as he presents himself to us in Christ to be a God unto us. Now this acceptance contains two things. (1.) A taking of God to save and bless us according to the Gospel. To save us, in Christ, from all our enemies; the curse of the law; the power of sin, the world, and the devil; the power of death, and the power of hell. And to bless us in the same Jesus Christ, by being at perfect peace with us; taking us to be his children; granting us his favour; comforting us in all our troubles; making us grow in grace; keeping us in death; receiving our departing souls; raising our mortal bodies; and causing us everlastingly to behold his face in the world to come. This is an act of faith, the betrusting the soul unto God the Saviour, upon a belief of his all-sufficiency,

and of his sure mercy in Jesus Christ. And herein we do evidently renounce any pretence of righteousness in ourselves, as well as all hope of happiness in the creature, laying up all our hope and happiness in a covenant-God. (2.) A taking of God to rule over us according to the Gospel; that is, to rule over us according to his revealed will by the power of his Spirit, wherein we renounce our own wisdom, submitting to his word; our own strength, subjecting ourselves to the guidance of his grace; and our own will, yielding ourselves up entirely unto his. This is the surrender of ourselves unto God to be a Lord and Master unto us. And in these two things lie our acceptance of God to be our God according to the offer that he makes of himself in Jesus Christ. In short, to believe in God is to believe that he is what he is, that is, what he hath revealed himself to be; to believe that, having reconciled the world unto himself by Jesus Christ, he offers himself to be a God unto us; and to declare our acceptance of this offer by betrusting our souls unto him, and surrendering up our whole selves to his service.

From the whole it appears, that when any one says, “ I believe in God,” according to the true design and meaning of the article, his intention is to declare, “ I believe there is one God, though subsisting in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; who, I steadfastly am assured, is a most glorious Spirit; that liveth of himself alone, being the life of all creatures; neither limited by place or time, but infinitely filling all things, and subsisting from ever-

“ lasting to everlasting ; his power without bounds,  
“ and his blessedness incapable of addition or dimi-  
“ nution ; the Governor of the world, and in every  
“ respect qualified to be so, being unspottedly up-  
“ right in all his commandments, just and equal in  
“ all his dispensations, and good in all his dealings ;  
“ unchangeable, because incapable of mistake, as in-  
“ finitely wise to order all things, and who cannot  
“ fail for ever in his nature or will. I do confess  
“ that I have most sinfully departed from the govern-  
“ ment of this my rightful King, and that for the  
“ same I am deserving he should never look upon  
“ me : but seeing he has sent his only-begotten Son  
“ into the world to save sinners, and has commanded  
“ me to believe in his name, I do solemnly declare,  
“ that I have no hope towards God but through Jesus  
“ Christ, in whom, and for whose sake, I desire al-  
“ ways to believe God is reconciled to me to the  
“ alone glory of grace. I publish this as the sole  
“ ground of my confidence towards God, and would  
“ have you all take notice, that I do most cordially  
“ join with you in our common and professed faith  
“ towards God through Jesus Christ our Lord only ;  
“ in whom, I do hereby solemnly declare, that I have  
“ taken, and do take God, according to his most  
“ condescending offer, to be my God, to pardon and  
“ accept, to sanctify, defend, and keep me to his  
“ use while I live, and to glorify me after this life,  
“ and this without any known reservation, and in a  
“ willing renunciation of all idols. In the full force  
“ and meaning of all which things I now say in the

“ presence of you all, and call upon you all to bear  
“ witness to this my declaration, *I believe in God.*”

And now, brethren, I may ask, have you understood these things? If you have, I must say unto you, happy are you, if you do them. For it was just now said, that this first article is the substance of all the Creed; so that if you truly say, “ I believe in “ God,” then God is your God, you have God the Father for your Father, God the Son for your Redeemer, and God the Holy Ghost for your Comforter. And if God be your God, then of course all things are yours; life, death, things present, and things to come, are yours: you are a true member of Christ’s body the church, are in the communion of saints, your sins are forgiven you, and the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting wait for you. In a word, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, are actually and always with you. And is all this nothing? Be sensible, I beseech you, of the noble honour and high privilege you are exalted to. Consider from whence you were taken, what you were, and whither you were going; be attentive to the now happy difference: How did you once think of God? With what hatred! with what terror! And now to behold the blessed object of your heart smiling upon you, O what a difference! What a forlorn creature once were you! uncomfortable amidst all the comforts of life, and O how uncomfortable in the day of your affliction! But now, what a refuge you have in God under all your troubles, what a calm within in the most tempestuous

seasons, what a peace, passing all understanding, in all your tribulations, while you look up and see it is your loving Father, your eternal Guide, your almighty Friend, that appoints and orders every affliction; while you look up and see his countenance bespeaking all love, while you look up and hear him say, *It is I, be not afraid!* Happy, happy difference! How you once trembled at death; were filled with horror in the prospect of judgment, and looked upon heaven without hope! “Alas!” you said in the anguish of your heart, “heaven is not my home, I have no part in the blessed inheritance of the saints; hell, hell, I fear, is my portion; I shall be cast into the bottomless pit, and howl through the ages of eternity from amidst the fire that shall never be quenched. But now God is my God; Jesus died for me; Jesus has interceded and prevailed; the eternal, almighty, living God, permits me to call him Father; he hath taken me among his children; he hath given me the spirit of a child, and I love him; I call him my Father, and he answers me; I cast all my care upon him, and he careth for me; he doth not, he will not leave nor forsake me, he is mine for ever and ever; I shall see his face; shall live at his right hand; I shall come with singing, and everlasting joy shall be upon my head. How is the bitterness of death passed! What is become of the King of Terrors? How is his visage changed! Blessed messenger of heaven, to bring me home to my God! Where is thy sting? And how are the wonted horrors of the judgment-day va-



“ nished ! I shall meet my Lord in the air, I shall  
“ be for ever with my God.” There were no end of  
displaying the difference there now is between the  
state of him who is alive from the dead, in compa-  
rison of what he was in the days of his unbelief.

And what ! will none of these things move the un-  
believer ? That unhappy soul, who lies before God  
as often as he says *I believe in God*, neither believing  
that God is what he is, nor believing in Jesus Christ  
as the only Mediator between God and man, nor ac-  
cepting God to be his God ; but, notwithstanding all  
these outward professions of believing in God, yield-  
ing himself daily to sin, and refusing God and his ser-  
vice ? Will none of these things move him ? My dear  
brother, what the believer once was, all that you still  
are, unpardoned, unholy, unhappy, hopeless, trem-  
bling at death.—What ! do not you tremble at death ?  
No. What ! do you defy Death ? Do you say to him,  
“ Come on, here am I, ready to meet thee ; come  
“ now, come this night, while I sleep, this night  
“ come and take me ?” What ! can you say so ? Alas !  
I know you do not like to hear of that ugly word,  
*death*. The very word makes you uneasy—you would  
be glad I should mention it no more. Death, death,  
death and damnation ; you have been often angry  
with me in your hearts for using such terrifying words.  
What ! will the man never have done ? Must we  
never hear of any thing else but hell and damnation ?  
You have been angry with me for this, you know you  
have. And why so ? Was it because I did any thing  
amiss, any thing contrary to duty or contrary to

charity, in telling you of these things? or was it not solely because you were made uneasy by the hearing them? Ah, there lies the truth of the matter. Had you thought your state good, you had not been a jot displeased with my utmost freedom; but your conscience was against you; and so it is now; it is pressing home upon you this moment, and forcing you to say, “ I know I am in that very state he has been  
“ just describing the believer to have been formerly  
“ in. He has been speaking the plain truth of my  
“ case; as he says, I am neither easy, nor happy.  
“ It is true enough, I am dreadfully afraid of death,  
“ and horribly afraid of judgment; and if he had said  
“ further, that I wish I were in the condition of that  
“ believer he has been speaking of, he would not  
“ have said a word more than is true; for I should  
“ think myself the happiest man in the world to be  
“ in the state that he is. But then he does not  
“ know what trials, and troubles, and difficulties are  
“ in my way. I would do something, but how can  
“ I? Were he in my place, he would speak another  
“ language.” Why, my dear friend, bear witness for me, did I ever say, either you, I, or any one, could go to heaven without difficulties and troubles? And yet I would needs have you go thither; I would not have the severest trials, the most formidable difficulties, to hinder you, because I am sure heaven would make you amends for all. In short, all that I have said is but what you knew if I had never said it, and which you knew to be so true, that you would have counted me a liar if I had said otherwise; for the

sum of all that I have said is, that if you do not believe, and leave your sins, you cannot be saved. Here lies the plain truth, and I earnestly pray God to stir you up to the consideration and practice of it. For, O! how happy should I be to see you all in heaven! Believe me, I do not give one of you over. And I must and will beseech you, every soul, to lay hold on everlasting life, while I have yet the power of begging any favour of you. Return, return, my dear brethren, why will ye die? Ah! cease not, give not yourselves rest day nor night, until you can truly say, *I believe in God.*

## S E R M O N IX.

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ACTS xvi. 30, 31.

*What must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.*

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AFTER having shown you the nature of divine faith, I proceed to set before you the object thereof, to wit, God in Christ, as expressed in the first words of the Creed, *I believe in God*. We must now go on to explain more at large what is included in these introductory words. And this is the doctrine of the three Persons in the divine nature, distinguished by the relation they bear to each other, and by their respective offices towards us, together with the happy effects on our parts resulting from our true belief in this Trinity.

Though there is but one God, yet the Scripture teaches us to own three Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, subsisting inconceivably together in the divine nature; as is sufficiently manifest by the form of baptism, and by the apostolical benediction, as well as by a large variety of Scriptures which declare this great mystery with incontestable plainness to the humble and unprejudiced mind. Wherefore we are

taught by our church to ‘ worship one God in trinity, and trinity in unity, neither confounding the Persons, nor dividing the substance.’ Whereby is understood, that God is the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and again, that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are one God. Concerning which it is needful to observe, that there is both an union and a distinction in the Godhead. The union is, that the three Persons are one in nature, one in the same undivided Godhead; that is, ‘ though the Father be God, the Son God, and the Holy Ghost God, yet they are not three distinct Gods,’ neither have they three different or separate parts of the Godhead, but one with another and one in another they are one and the same God. Nevertheless, although not separated and divided, yet are they distinguished; the Father is not the Son nor the Holy Ghost, neither is the Son the Father or the Holy Ghost, nor the Holy Ghost the Father or the Son. They subsist distinctly, though undividedly, in the same Godhead, ‘ the whole three Persons co-eternal together and co-equal.’

In speaking of the three Persons in the divine nature, we are to consider the relation they bear to each other, and their respective offices towards us.

The first Person in the Godhead is *the Father*.

Now Father, being a relative term, hath reference to a Son, without which there could not be a Father. The property of the first Person, considered as subsisting in the Godhead, is to beget, to wit, the second Person, who is therefore called the Son. When you read in Scripture of the Father’s begetting the Son, you

must not conceive thereof as you do of one creature's begetting another, for there is an utter difference. Creatures beget their offspring in time, the Father the Son from eternity. The Father begets the Son by communicating to him his whole essence; which cannot be done by creatures, because so they would be themselves reduced to nothing. When the Father begets the Son, that Son is not a Being separate from the Father, as is the case in all other generation, but they subsist together in the same undivided essence.

Thus you see what relation the first Person bears to the second, and for what reason he is most eminently entitled the *Father*. But because of this relation he bears to the Son, who hath assumed our nature that he might redeem us, the Father also is the Father of those who believe in the name of his only-begotten Son. For although God be in one sense the Father of us all, inasmuch as we are made by him, yet that peculiar interest in him, which is implied in the title *Father*, we forfeited by sin, and it is only restored to us by grace, so that he is the Father of those only who believe. And to all these he is a Father, *for as many as received him (Christ), to them gave he power to become the sons of God.*

The meaning of the words therefore is, 'I believe in God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, as my Father in him.' Wherein these several things are implied.

*First*, and principally, a profession of faith. I believe that God the Father is a Father in Christ Jesus to all them that believe, and my Father in particular,

The Creed is our confession of the assured and steadfast belief we have of the truth of the Gospel, that is, of God, as he has manifested himself in mercy unto us by Jesus Christ. Consequently to say, I believe in the Father, is to say, I believe that he is reconciled, no longer a consuming God, but an affectionate Parent unto his church, in and for the sake of his dear Son. Now, do we believe this? Are we fully and unquestionably persuaded, that *when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, that we might receive the adoption of sons?* That notwithstanding our guilt, and the curse of the law, yet coming humbly to God, and pleading the merits of Jesus Christ, God actually receives us? As far as we fail here, it is manifest we come short of a full belief of the sufficiency of the Gospel-method of salvation. But as far as we are steadfast herein, that God is the Father of all them that believe, we shall also believe that he is our Father too in particular, confessing our sins, and coming to him by Jesus Christ. It is true, if we do not confess our sins, and come to God in his own way, he is no Father to us. But then it is not less certain, that if we do confess our sins, and humbly sue for his mercy in Christ, he is actually our Father; and if so doing we yet do not believe him to be our Father, the real reason of it is, that we do not steadfastly, as we ought, believe the reconciliation that is in Christ Jesus, and that, for his sake, God is a Father to the Lord's people. It is an artifice, I suppose, of the devil, to get a charge of presumption to be laid upon any that shall think God

to be reconciled to them, and their Father. And what makes me the rather suspect his hand to be in it is, that this false notion, covered over with a show of humility, does secretly strike at the sufficiency of Gospel-salvation, the truth of God's promises, the comfort and growth of God's people. The faith of God's church is, "I acknowledge God to be the Father of all them that believe." And shall it then be said, it is presumption for any man to apply this personally and particularly to himself? Should any one say, I do indeed believe that God is a Father to his church, but I am a vile unworthy sinner, how can he be *my* Father? Let such an one know, that he does not steadfastly, as he imagines he does, believe that God in Christ is reconciled and a Father to his church; and that in reality his want of a particular faith respecting himself is owing to a defect in his general faith concerning the church. I do not say that God is not a Father to such, because I am told the contrary, none that come are cast out, though they come trembling. Have they but so much faith as engages them to come, they are received. But then this does not afford a proof that there is no sin in such misbelief and doubting suspicion of the Gospel-declarations. It is very dishonourable to God's mercy, truth, wisdom, and justice, set forth to our faith in the Gospel. And every one that confesses with his mouth, "I believe in God the Father," ought at the same time to be able to say in his heart, I believe he is actually the Father of all that believe; and, seeing this is the faith which I therefore confess, because I



rest my own soul upon it, I believe him to be *my* Father also. Let us not seek excuses for the great sin of unbelief, but, confessing our sins, let us pray that we may steadfastly believe God's promises, that he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and is a Father unto us for his Son Jesus Christ's sake, to the glory of his grace, and to the comfort and establishment of our souls.

*Secondly.*—"I believe in the Father" implies a child-like confidence. I look upon God as a Father, and as such I have confidence in him. *Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.* The spirit under the law was ministered according to the peculiar design of that dispensation, which was to be a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ. And what there was in that dispensation suited to beget bondage and fear, the apostle tells us, when he says, *Ye are not, now under the Christian dispensation, come unto the mount that might not be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words, which voice they that heard entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more (for they could not endure that which was commanded); and if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart. And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake.* Now, says he, out of this dispensation ye are passed, ye have not received again the spirit of bondage to fear. Under the Gos-

pel all breathes love, and suitably therewith the Spirit is ministered as a Spirit of adoption, whereby with the confidence of children we call God Father. Confidence in God becomes this last and fullest publication of the Gospel by the Son of God in person. Hereof the believer speaking in the Creed is supposed to be sensible, and to profess his belief that God is his Father with the confidence of a child. Be sensible then of your privilege, ye that believe in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ; cast away your fears, that are dishonourable to a God that *spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all*; strive earnestly for the spirit of children, that, in a manner becoming the Gospel of his Son, ye may *serve God without fear*. Hear what he says, *Come out from among them, and be ye separate*: now this call you have complied with, as many as are joined to the Lord. Then it follows, speaking to you, *I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty*. We disgrace the free and rich love of God, and the infinite merit of the Redeemer's righteousness and blood, as far as we come short of walking with God in the humble confidence of children. Let the believer therefore remember, that he is *no more a servant, but a son*, and pray for that spirit of faith which shall enable him to say "I believe in God *the Father*" with that joyful confidence which the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ not only warrants but requires, and which the person here confessing his faith in God is supposed to be possessed of.

*Thirdly.*—“ I believe in the Father” implies a child-like disposition towards God. I own God to be my Father, and I profess myself to be his son, ready to pay him all dutiful and child-like obedience. It is the sure proof of our relation to God as a Father that we have the spirit of children wrought in us; a spirit of love, and of a ready mind to do the will of God. They that are God’s children have some measure of the spirit of Jesus, their elder Brother, whose *meat and drink it was to do the will of Him that sent him*, without murmuring at any of his orders, or thinking his commandments grievous. The grief of a true child of God is that he should sin against him, and thereby dishonour and displease him; his greatest lamentation is over that body of sin which lurks in his members, and suffers him not to be that dutiful child he would be. ‘ I believe God to be my Father,’ he says, ‘ and I regard myself as his child, cheerfully  
‘ to subject myself unto his holy will in all things.  
‘ *O how love I thy law! all the day long is my study*  
‘ *in it.* Take notice, all ye that hear me, while I say  
‘ these words, *I believe in God the Father*, I think  
‘ myself obliged by every tie of duty and gratitude,  
‘ and I am fully and gladly determined, to keep the  
‘ commandments of my God.’ And if we cannot say this in the sincerity of our hearts; if God’s commandments are hated or despised by us, and we will not walk in them; where is there even the spirit of a *servant*? But should we endeavour to keep them while it is merely through fear of punishment, and are only restrained from sin lest it should bring us to ruin, and

forced upon duties because otherwise we cannot be easy, where is the spirit of *children*? It is plain that the most of those who call themselves Christians are living in a flat contrariety to the temper and conduct of one truly believing in God as a Father; and it is not less manifest, that there are many of those that may well enough be termed serious people, who, through want of deep humbleness of mind, and from a degree of ignorance respecting the freedom of Gospel-salvation, and the privileges that belong to it, are serving God more like slaves than children. It is in an increasing knowledge of God's free love to us in Jesus Christ, and in a growing confidence in him as our Father, that we become followers of God as dear and obedient children, not fashioning ourselves according to the former lusts in our ignorance, but ready to every good word and work.

*Lastly.*—To believe in God as a Father implies a readiness to submit to all his disposals of and dispensations towards us. This is indisputable. Is God my Father? then he loves me. And is my Father infinitely wise? then he cannot mistake in his management of me. Therefore I say, let him have the whole direction of me; else I should not truly believe in him as my Father. Let him provide for me as he sees best; and whether the provision he allots me be more or less, it is the portion he gives me, and I will be content. If he takes from it, I will not complain, because I know him to be a loving Father. If he corrects me, shall I murmur against him? This were to suspect his fatherly love. Foolishness, I know, is

bound in my heart, and the rod of correction must drive it far from me. When I call God my Father, I declare an implicit and reverent submission to all his disposals. In all our possessions, and in all our afflictions, to sanctify the Lord God in our hearts is an eminent branch of believing in God as our Father. If we are dissatisfied with his allotment of the things of the world unto us, if we murmur under his corrections, how can we believe him to have the bowels of a Father, how do we treat him in correspondence with what we profess? Really, to believe in God as our Father, you see goes into the dispensations and troubles, as well as the duties, of every day. *Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass away from me; nevertheless, not my will but thine be done.* Behold there the true spirit of a child.

By this time you may see something of the true sense and meaning of this word, *I believe in God the Father*, and that whoever says it, according to the full intention thereof as a point of Christian faith, doth thereby declare, ‘ I believe that the Father is in a  
‘ peculiar sense so *entitled*, as bearing the relation of a  
‘ Father to his only-begotten Son, but I believe also  
‘ that in and for the sake of that only-begotten Son  
‘ manifest in the flesh, he is a Father to all those  
‘ among the fallen race of mankind, who believe in  
‘ the name of his Son Jesus Christ. As one of that  
‘ happy number I glory in him as my Father, and  
‘ with the whole church do profess my humble but  
‘ assured confidence in him in the delightful charac-  
‘ ter of their and my Father. As such I desire and

‘ determine to honour and reverence him, delighting  
 ‘ to do his will, whatever it be, and in all things to  
 ‘ submit to his fatherly guidance, without hypocrisy,  
 ‘ partiality, disputing, or complaining; in every thing  
 ‘ willing to approve myself the child of this my hea-  
 ‘ venly Father, to his glory, and to my peace and  
 ‘ happiness.’

And now what say we? Do we thus believe in God the Father? No; the most are not thus related to him. Their consciences and their lives proclaim they are not. What! do they believe God to be *their* Father; and do they rejoice in him as *their* God? Should they fancy they do these things, yet do they walk with him as dear children, and submit to his providential disposals with a child-like quietness and thankfulness? Here at least they see themselves wanting; they are self-willed, disobedient, impatient, and dissatisfied. They live according to their own humour; and will, as far as they can, have every thing after their own mind. Their whole pretensions to faith amount only to this, to *say* they believe in God the Father, to *call* themselves his servants, to come into his house, and to stand up and repeat the Creed without any design or meaning; if these things will serve the turn, they are believers as good as the best. But if you expect any thing else from them, if you will have them humble themselves for their apostate nature and their sinful practices, come to God by Jesus Christ in earnest and importunate prayer for mercy, beseeching him, as for their lives, that he will take them into his favour, and be a Father unto them; if

you expect they should esteem it their greatest happiness to have God for their Father, and that they diligently seek to obtain a warrantable persuasion that he is so; if you look that they manifest their relation to God by all kinds of good works, and by behaving in such manner as to glorify God; if you are expecting any thing of this from them, they will be excused from a faith so troublesome and self-denying. And what can we say to such? If they will not be persuaded to such a faith, what can we do? If they will refuse the glorious liberty of being God's children, what besides can we offer them? If they will neither be influenced by the dignity and honour of such a relation, nor have regard to the noble privileges that attend it in having the eternal God to hear all their prayers, to pity all their infirmities, to supply all their wants, to support and comfort them in life, death, and glory, what more can we do but be sorry and pray for them? Unhappy creatures! They let pass the golden opportunity that can never be recovered; they suffer the day of salvation to set upon them, that never, never shall rise again! O how will they wish in a very little time, when it is too late, that God was their Father! when the day of judgment appears in its awful terrors, how will they then wish that God was their Father!

But a word to others. You do not think I have carried the matter too far, by stating so high as I have done believing in God the Father? The truth is, your duty and happiness go together; and I wish rather to bring you up to your duty, than to lower

that to your standard. Should I have said less than I have, it would have been doing you a sensible injury; for did you thus believe in God, would you not be more happy and more holy? And I leave you to judge whether I have advanced any thing which the promises of God will not authorize, and the duty of believing demand.

I take my leave of the whole with one word to those whose eyes are now opening upon spiritual things, and see themselves encompassed for the present with a variety of difficulty. To such I say, how delightful and encouraging is the prospect before you in the adoption of children! How would ye rejoice, my dear friends, could ye say, "God is our Father; he is ours, and we are his! The almighty living God is mine; he that liveth for evermore is mine! Mine to love me, bless me, comfort me, keep me, glorify me! He is my Father, even mine!" Would not this make you happy? And see the Only-Begotten stands in your nature with opened arms to receive and introduce you to *his Father and your Father, to his God and your God*. O how sure will your title then be to the adoption of a child! See, the Word, even that Word which will not pass away when heaven and earth are gone, is before you to teach and direct you. See, the Spirit is come knocking at the door of your heart, and soliciting an entrance, that he may bring you to Jesus, and to God in him. How forcibly he pleads! how he says in your heart, behold here through thy life all this sin, and before thee all that damnation, why wilt thou die? Behold, Jesus



died for the ungodly ; hear how he says, *Come to me, and I will give thee rest* ; behold, the Father looks toward thee, it is a look of love, hearken to his gracious voice ; “ Come out, and I will be a Father unto thee, and thou shalt be my child.” What encouragement ! But is this all ? Let all the triumphs of the dying hour speak, let all the glories of the judgment-day declare, let all the joys of the everlasting heavens publish, if you be not called to a blessing indeed when God invites you to him to become his child. Take courage. Let not Satan terrify, nor man dismay, nor interest insnare, nor pleasure beguile you of God your reward. Keep your eye fixed on the glorious God. How glorious he is ! How does his favour make the angels happy ! How happy will you be when you can say, *I believe in God the Father !*

## S E R M O N X.

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ACTS xvi. 30, 31.

*What must I do to be saved? And they said, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.*

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“ I BELIEVE in God the Father” having been considered, we now pass on to the next word in this first article of our Creed, *Almighty*.

The almightiness of God has reference to his *authority* and *dominion* over all things, and also to his *all-sufficiency* and *might* to do whatever he pleases. In the latter sense it is to be more distinctly spoken to in the sixth article, where the same word returns, “ he sitteth on the right hand of God the Father “ Almighty.” Here it is to be understood in the former sense, as expressive of God’s absolute dominion and authority over all things; to which he has an unquestionable right as being Maker of all things, and for which he is fully qualified, as being endued with a most upright will to order his subjects aright, and with power, knowledge, and the inspection of his own eye to uphold, restrain, and correct them.

I mean not to take up your time in proving what no one, who believes there is a God, denies. The

very devils know and believe God to be the Governor of the world. When we say, "I believe in God the Father Almighty," we own the same truth also, but we own it aright, in a spirit different from them, in a sincere disposition of heart to be subject to his government. This is what makes the article Christian, and gives it a place in our Creed. We own the Father to be Almighty in a cheerful confession of his rightful dominion over us, and in a willing determination that he shall rule over us. We speak it as they who are returned from their rebellion, into which all are fallen by the sin of Adam, and as brought back unto the Father through the mediation and by the grace of Jesus Christ his only Son our Saviour.

The dominion over all things is here ascribed unto the Father, while in other Scriptures you will find it referred unto the Son. The reason of which is, that although lordship over all things be in the Son by constitution, and as receiving it from the Father for the special work of mediation, yet the right rests in the Father, who made all things for himself. And therefore that dominion, which as to the execution of the Father's will is actually and fully in the Son, is nevertheless ultimately in the Father, and therefore here ascribed to him.

The dominion of the Father is an absolute sovereignty over all creatures, with whom he does therefore according to his own pleasure, and, without giving account of any of his matters, command, forbid, and dispose of them in all cases. And therefore his dominion implies,

*First.*—His absolute and everlasting empire, whereby he is *King of kings and Lord of lords, sitteth over all from the beginning, and remaineth a King for ever.*

*Secondly.*—And in consequence of this absolute empire, a right of giving laws to his subjects as he pleases, which are to be regarded as the sole rule of their conduct. So what we call virtue and vice, good and evil, do not at all consist in acting up to the supposed obligation arising from the fitness or unfitness of things, according to our estimation of them, but in obedience or disobedience to the supreme will of God. To obey God is virtue, and to disobey him is vice. To do or forbear, therefore, because the thing to be done seems fit, or because that which is to be forborne seems otherwise, exclusively of a due regard had to God's authority, however right it may be in itself thus to do or forbear, is no act of religion. There is no doubt that all God's commands are in themselves most right and fit, being constituted upon an infinitely wise plan devised by God himself; but then to do them solely because they are so, not because he commands them, is plainly to lay aside his authority. Yet upon that God insists. He will be obeyed absolutely. He does not subject his laws to our examination in such manner, that we shall only do them, because we see them right. He expects to be obeyed because he is God and King. Laying aside this measure of obedience we subject ourselves to endless dispute and uncertainty; and, in fact, cast away that which can alone influence the conscience. God's

will is the law of his subjects ; while they have regard to that as the ground of their obligation to do and forbear, they obey ; when they depart from it, setting up another measure, and searching into the reasonableness of the command to found their obligation thereupon, they assuredly fall into sin. See all this in an instance or two. God said to Adam, *Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat ; for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.* Here was a plain command of God, resting simply upon his authority, without the least intimation of a reason why the fruit of this tree was forbidden to be eat. It was the test of Adam's obedience to God's supreme will. Now what step does Satan take to effect his purpose ? He artfully draws away the woman's attention from the obligation arising out of God's authority, by leading her into an inquiry after the design and fitness of the prohibition. The ground of obedience being thus forgotten, he easily reasons her into a persuasion, that it would be far better for her to eat it than forbear. Just so you may find it to have been with yourself. While, with never so good a design, you have been reasoning about the excellency of any of God's laws, in order to stir yourself up to conformity therewith, and have not laid as your foundation the command and authority of God, which alone has power to bind and influence the conscience, you have found that there was neither weight nor power from all your discoveries to constrain your mind, and, however you might judge such a conduct fit, you had no ability to practise it. It is the sense

of God's sovereign authority which in fact influences to all duties. In the sight of this we can fear because we have done what was forbidden, or take confidence in God through Jesus Christ because we are doing what is commanded. But should you, without respect to God's authority, set yourself, from the unreasonableness of sin, or the reasonableness of believing, to the practice of godly fear, and exercising faith, you would certainly find yourself both unhumbled and unbelieving; which I doubt not is a common case. Take another instance. God bids Abraham sacrifice Isaac. Had the father of the faithful gone to any other fitness than the fitness of an immediate, absolute, unquestioning obedience to the command of God, he had certainly been overset, and come short of that conduct which was so eminently pleasing to him. But one and another may be ready to say, What can we think of such a command? Could it be right or fit for a father to sacrifice his son? Is it not contrary to all the notions we have of duty? If the obligations of duty be the fitness of things, according to our judgment of them it is. But if these obligations arise from the mere authority of God, it is just the contrary, and Abraham would certainly have sinned had he withholden his only son from God. And therefore this instance, with some others in Scripture, stands eminently forth in proof that it is the authority and command of God which is our only rule of judging any thing to be good or evil, and which alone begets obligation of duty. If therefore you shall at any time hear cavils raised against this case of Abraham

or others, be upon your guard, and be sensible that they who dispute in this manner are acting over again the conduct of Satan when he tempted Eve, by endeavouring to take you off from the obligations of duty as simply arising from the will and command of God, and to bring you to such subtle inquiries into the fitness and unfitness of God's commands as tend to cast his sovereign authority out of your mind, to make you lose all sense of his dominion, to leave you in all uncertainty and doubt, effectually to weaken all the bands of conscience, and set you at liberty to do as you list, as your corrupted inclinations dispose you.

*Thirdly.*—It belongs to God's sovereignty to restrain from disobedience by punishment, and to encourage unto submission by promises. The former of these was expressed and the latter implied in the covenant made with Adam, when God said, *In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.* To ascertain the measure of these is the prerogative of God, who unquestionably has a right to encourage obedience by rewards infinitely surpassing any excellence there is therein, and who cannot be suspected of punishing sin beyond its desert. You must take heed respecting the one and the other to have your eye on the sovereignty of God, both that you may not question the title he has given you to glory because of the vast disproportion there is between it and your worthless services, if you are in a state of obedience; and also may not dispute the equitableness of his declared punishments against you, if you

are disobedient, and so, screening yourself under the vain hope that he will not punish you at all, remain a rebel. There is, indeed, no proportion between the service we pay God and the reward prepared for us: but there is doubtless an exact proportion between sin and the punishment threatened against it. If you cannot deny that the great Sovereign of the universe may dispense the reward because it is great, so do not set about to persuade yourself he will not inflict the punishment because it is terrible. Beware again here also of making your judgment of what is fit and right the measure of God's sanctions, lest, as in the former case, you would be reasoned out of all religion, so in this latter you should reason yourself into hell. God knows better than you what sin deserves. Debate not against his determinations. As the august Governor of the world, he hath decreed that the *wicked shall go away into hell, and all the people that forget God*. And can you stop his hand? Will you say to him, What dost thou? When you are perished for ever, will you be able to contend, thou art unrighteous in this which thou hast brought upon me? Let God have his place, and know you yours, which is to obey; but if you will not, to suffer that punishment which he, as your rightful and almighty Sovereign, hath decreed against you. Strange that any should contend against the truth of an eternity of torment, when fallen angels are reserved to it; not annihilated (which is the sinner's greatest hope hereafter), but reserved unto the judgment of the great day, to be cast into that fire of divine everlasting



wrath which is prepared for them. And if eternal torments are certain, can they be unjust? Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? Yes, my brethren, the Lord will be God, he will govern the world, let the sinners of hell or earth contend as they please; he will make the one and other know that he judgeth righteously. Lay it to heart, you unwise. You are subject to God's dominion, you know you are. You are rebelling against him; you dare not say the contrary. And will he yield up his government? Shall not he punish? *Behold, he cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity.* O how will you be able to abide the day of his coming? The Lord have mercy upon us, and bring us all to repentance, that we experience not what the power and duration of his wrath shall be!—But,

*Fourthly.*—God's dominion also takes in his providence. He is not an indolent and unconcerned, but an observant and active Governor. He ordereth all things. Hear what the Scripture saith of the kingdom of Providence; 'the counsel of the Lord shall stand, and he will do all his pleasure.' See this in his government of the inanimate world. 'He commandeth the sun, and it riseth not, and he sealeth up all the stars. God thundereth marvellously with his voice, he directeth his lightnings unto the ends of the earth. He causeth the vapours to ascend, he bringeth forth the winds out of his treasures. He saith to the snow, Be thou on the earth. Fire and hail, snow and vapour, wind and storm, fulfil his

‘ word : he turneth them round about with his counsel, that they may do whatsoever he commandeth them : he causeth them to come, whether for correction or mercy. The Lord giveth rain, the former and latter in his season, that men may gather in their corn, their wine, and their oil : he shutteth up the heavens, that there be no rain, and that the land yield not her fruit. He turneth a fruitful land into barrenness, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein.’ Well, all this God doth. How say then the wise men of the world that there is no such thing as a particular Providence, searching into second causes for the springs of all things ? But see it also in the animal world. ‘ Things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts, wait upon him, and he giveth them their meat in due season : he giveth it them, and they gather it : he openeth his hand, and they are filled with good : he hideth his face and they are troubled, when he taketh away their breath they die and return to their dust. He feedeth the fowls of the air, and not a sparrow falleth to the ground without him.’ What ! is there all this too, and yet no such thing as a particular Providence ? But see it in the government of kingdoms. ‘ The Most High ruleth in the kingdoms of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will. The Lord increaseth the nations, and destroyeth them : he enlargeth the nations, and straiteneth them again, and at what instant he speaketh concerning a nation or a kingdom, to build and to plant it, or to pluck up, and pull down and to destroy it, it shall be done.’

See it also in particular persons. ‘ From him cometh  
‘ every good and perfect gift, neither is there any evil  
‘ in the world, and the Lord hath not done it. He  
‘ killeth, and he maketh alive. He numbereth the  
‘ hairs of our head. Unto God the Lord belong the  
‘ issues from death: if he gather unto himself the  
‘ spirit of man, and his breath, all flesh shall perish  
‘ together, and man shall turn again unto dust. The  
‘ preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of  
‘ the tongue, are from the Lord. He hideth from the  
‘ wise and prudent what he revealeth unto babes.  
‘ He maketh poor, and maketh rich: he bringeth  
‘ low, and lifteth up. Riches and honour come of  
‘ him. He maketh the barren woman to be a joyful  
‘ mother of children. In his hand our breath is,  
‘ and his are all our ways.’ Thus you see how in  
the kingdom of Providence all things are under  
God’s direction. He ruleth over all, and guideth all  
things as he pleases. Things great and little are  
under his care. Nothing comes by chance; and all  
things, even the most free and voluntary actions, even  
the deeds of evil men, serve him, and he presides  
over all to make every thing issue to his glory. We  
are always for reasonings, always full of presump-  
tuous murmurings, and care not that God should  
rule over us. We are ready to disavow God’s domi-  
nion, we are ready to debate his commands, we like  
not his distributive justice, we would be disengaged  
from his interfering with the things of the world.  
This is the way of proud sinful man. But it is not  
the way of our believer: Jesus has taught him a bet-

ter lesson. And he says, in correspondence with the whole of God's government, " I believe in God the Father Almighty." And his full meaning is this :

‘ I believe that God the Father holds an absolute, uncontrollable, rightful, and eternal dominion over all creatures, both in heaven and earth ; and, as one of his subjects, however rebellious I have been, yet now, brought back again unto him by Jesus Christ, and emboldened to call him my Father, I do humbly and reverently own his dominion over me ; and I do sincerely desire to regard and respect him as my King, Lord, and Master, while I have any being in this world and that which is to come ; sincerely purposing, by his grace, that no other Lord shall ever any more have dominion over me, and yielding myself with the full and free choice of my heart, and with all readiness, gladness, and joyfulness, to be his subject, to serve him only, from this moment unto all ages of eternity.—I do heartily consent to his authority over me, to command me in whatever way he chooses, and I am determined to do whatever he bids me, and to forbear whatever he shall forbid me to do ; respecting, as I do, his command, as the only measure of my duty, and as the grand obligation to my obedience. And I am steadfastly purposed never to dispute his injunctions, be they what they will, but always in a dutiful manner to be satisfied with them, and according to my power to put them into practice, without gain-saying, and however contrary they may be to my carnal interest or inclinations ; being certainly as-

‘sured that God has an unlimited title to enjoin me  
‘whatever he pleases, nor less persuaded that he  
‘cannot command me any thing but what is exactly  
‘fittest for his glory and my happiness.—And I do  
‘further declare, that, as I am perfectly satisfied our  
‘Almighty Father has a right to deal with his rebel-  
‘lious subjects in such a manner as he pleases, and  
‘as shall best correspond with the honour of his so-  
‘vereignty and the ends of his government, so he  
‘both has dealt and will deal with us all in such man-  
‘ner, as that both they who serve him have and shall  
‘have infinite reason to adore his mercy and good-  
‘ness, and they who perish in their disobedience shall  
‘not have the least cause of accusing him of cruelty  
‘or injustice. I acknowledge him to be righteous in  
‘all that he has brought upon *me*, and it is of his  
‘mercies that I am not consumed. And I am so far  
‘from thinking his present or future judgments severe,  
‘that I cannot complain, whatever he should do with  
‘me, having forfeited all right to his favour by my  
‘sins, and doing so every day. For which reason I  
‘hold it my bounden duty, and what is a debt to his  
‘justice and mercy, that I should never murmur  
‘under any of his dispensations, that I should receive  
‘all his favours as undeserved acts of bounty, and  
‘eternal life as his free gift to me in Jesus Christ my  
‘Lord.—And, finally, seeing I am assured this eter-  
‘nal King my Father actually ordereth, disposeth,  
‘and ruleth all things great and little, not only in  
‘heaven, but also here upon earth, according to his

‘ pleasure, and in such a wise and sovereign way as  
 ‘ his government over us demands, I do therefore  
 ‘ heartily desire to submit quietly, thankfully, and  
 ‘ observantly, to all his disposals of me in all things  
 ‘ and all circumstances; wishing never to be dis-  
 ‘ pleased with any of his dispensations, but to leave  
 ‘ myself for life or death, health or sickness, prosperity  
 ‘ or adversity, in all places, times, changes, and con-  
 ‘ ditions, to his guidance; and being purposed by his  
 ‘ help so to demean myself under all his providential  
 ‘ will, as both not to dishonour him, and also to  
 ‘ testify to my own conscience and to the world  
 ‘ that I really believe the providence of my God,  
 ‘ that I trust upon him as my Father, and submit  
 ‘ to him as his servant. And this is what I ho-  
 ‘ nestly intend, and sincerely mean, when I make  
 ‘ my confession, and say, *I believe in God the Father*  
 ‘ *Almighty.*’

Here you see, brethren, the faith of a Christian  
 concerning the dominion of God. And you cannot  
 but observe that every tittle of it goes into the practice  
 of the heart and life.

Now could you, as I went along, adopt the con-  
 fession here read before you? Or, if you could not as  
 you wished, yet did you really desire to do so, and  
 honestly purpose by the grace of God that you would  
 never cease your endeavour of coming nearer and  
 nearer to this temper and conduct of a subject of God?  
 Then I must say, *Peace be unto you. And I pray that*  
*our God would count you worthy of this calling, and*

*fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power : that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.* But did you find this faith was not in you? That from point to point, as we went on, there was a grievous opposition between your temper and that described? That you knew not God's dominion, and were and had been subservient to selfish and worldly aims, standing out in rebellion, and affecting still to be your own master, and independent of God in all your views and prospects? That you had not subjected your spirit, soul, and body, to God's government, irreverently disregarding his commanding will, or calling the fitness of it in question, or living at your own discretion, or framing a religion from your own head, suited to your own fancy, and conforming to the will of God so far only as you pleased? That you could not digest God's distributions of rewards and punishments, being dissatisfied that every thing was not just according to your mind, displeased because there was no other way to heaven besides that disagreeable one of Gospel-obedience, and your heart rising with peculiar aversion against the sentence of everlasting damnation? That you had been disinclined to God's providential disposals, had always wished to have the management of yourself, being continually displeased with what was ministered unto you, never rich enough and great enough, things never to your mind, always dissatisfied, always complaining, always unthankful? Have you found, I say, that you have

been thus perversely minded, quite another thing in heart and life from what a believer is, and every reasonable creature of God should be? Do you find that you have never owned God's dominion, nor subjected your conduct to his authority, nor paid any reverence to his tremendous threatenings or gracious promises, nor given yourself up to the guidance of his Providence, but have been in the temper of your heart, and behaved in the actions of your life, as if you had been your own master, and there had been no God to rule over you; as if you had been sent into the world to do as you list, and there was never any account to be taken; as if the world was made for you, and not you and it for God? I say, have you led an ungodly, idle, wicked, unhumbled, selfish life? If this be your case, it is plain you cannot say, *I believe in God the Father Almighty*; for you do not at all believe in him as Lord over you. No, you are a rebel, and so you have always been; and, let me tell you, so God regards you. That indeed may seem a light matter now; but, when the Almighty shall set the terrors of his indignation and vengeance in array against you, it will then not be so indifferent a thing as you at present make it. Why, my friends, what in the name of God do you mean to do? You will not surely stand it out in defiance? If so, you will infallibly fall into the hands of the living God; and that is a terrible thing. You cannot, can you, fight against him that made the worlds, and will burn them up with the breath of his mouth? You are not, you know you are not, stronger than he. What then will the end



of this be? Who do you really think will prevail? What! *you*, against God? See if you can stand forth now, make the few following trials. Stop the course of yonder sun. Stop the advance of age. Say, I will never grow old. Keep sickness at a distance. Drive all disappointment before you. Arrest the hand of Death, and, with an authority that he dares not resist, tell him, Thou shalt not kill me. Come, do only this. Alas! are you not able? How then can you fight against God? O what, what will the end be! As your friend I heartily advise you, as your minister, as though God did beseech you by me, I humbly plead with, entreat, and pray you to be reconciled to God. What a shame is it, when God condescends, that you shall stand out, refuse his offered mercy, refuse his service, and rush upon your own ruin! Will you then continue obstinate? I trust you will not. Hear what Mercy says, that mercy which waits to be gracious to you, *As I live I have no pleasure in the death of a sinner, why will ye die?* Hear how injured Majesty affectingly complains, *The ox knoweth his owner, but my people will not consider.* Hear what Conscience remonstrates, *Wilt thou thus requite the Lord?* Hear how Jesus invites, *Come to me and be saved, come and I will give thee a crown of life.* Hear the voice of departed saints, *O follow me!* and the voice of departed sinners, *O come not into this place of torments!* Hear the cry, the united cry, of God, Christ, Angels, Ministers, Time, Death, Judgment, Eternity, Heaven, Hell—*Return, return, and save thy soul!*

I can say no more. The Lord give you his grace, without which all these cries and calls will be ineffectual! The Lord give you his grace, and make you his happy everlasting servants. *Amen, Amen.*

Now unto the King, eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. *Amen.*

## S E R M O N XI.

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ACTS xvi. 30, 31.

*What must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.*

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WE are now to conclude the first article of the Creed, and to speak of the last words of it, *Maker of heaven and earth.*

The Person to whom creation is here ascribed is the Father. In divers places of Scripture this work is attributed to the Son, as also to the Holy Ghost. Concerning which it should be observed, that though the action of each Person in the Trinity be that of the whole Godhead, inasmuch as the three Persons do not subsist separately, but unitedly, in the same substance, yet each Person has an office towards us which is peculiar to himself, the actions of which cannot in the same sense be ascribed to the other. In all actions towards us the order of the Trinity is, that the Father is the mover, and the Son executes from him by the Spirit, and nevertheless we are taught to say, that certain actions are more proper to one of these divine Persons than to the others, in which view we ascribe the work of creation to the Father, the work of re-

demption to the Son, and the work of sanctification to the Spirit, notwithstanding that all these three works are originally in the Father, and that there is a concurrence and co-operation of all the Persons in all of them.

To create is to make what was not before. Before the creation there was nothing but God, who was pleased, by an astonishing exertion of his will and power, to produce all things into being, in all that beautiful order and excellent perfection wherein they subsist. He created the heaven and the earth, and all things that are in both of them. ‘For by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible; whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities or powers; all things were created by him and for him.’

But simply to own that God is the Maker of heaven and earth is not to enter into the design of this point, considered as a matter of Christian faith. We must consider what is the end of God’s making the heaven and the earth; for, whatever that be, correspondent thereunto is the intention and disposition of the person here professing his faith. Now we are expressly told, that God *did not create the world in vain*, but that *he made all things for himself, for his glory, that we should shew forth his praise*; because not only of him and to him, but also and especially *for him, are all things*. And if this was the design of the creation, then the faith of our professor, suitable hereunto, is an acknowledgment of God’s right and property in all things for his glory, accompanied with a disposi-

tion to use all things accordingly. For the word is not this, 'I believe that God is the Maker of heaven and earth;' but 'I believe *in* God considered in the character of the great Creator of all things,' which implies, that I am returned from my alienation and independency to my proper place of a creature, and am willing to behave toward God in a creaturely manner, glorifying him as the work of his own hands ought to do. What was the temper of Adam's heart while in innocence towards his Creator? and what use was he disposed to make of himself, and every thing about him? Just that is the language of the believer's heart in regard of his Creator, and what he wishes to be and do when he says, *I believe in God, the Maker of heaven and earth.* The true belief of God as Maker of all things restores the order of creation, brings into execution God's original design, ranges every thing in its proper place, exalts the Creator, and reduces the creature to his due estate of dependency. Wherefore, to believe in the Maker of heaven and earth implies,

*First.*—A disposition, with reverence, humility, and adoration, to ascribe unto God the glory of his works, The song of the elders is, *Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.* Like unto which is the song of David, *The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy-work.* And elsewhere, *When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained; what*

*is man, that thou art mindful of him?* Believers have their senses exercised to discern the power, wisdom, and goodness of God in his works, with admiration and self-abasement. But, unto the unbeliever, neither do the heavens declare the glory of God's perfections; nor do they know what it is, in the contemplation of God's wondrous works, to cry out with shame and astonishment, *Lord, what is man?* Either not considering God in his works, or, if they do, priding themselves in their curious discoveries, instead of humbling themselves in the sight of what God hath wrought, and giving glory to his name.

*Secondly.*—To believe in God, the Maker of heaven and earth, implies a disposition to use all the creatures about us in a manner consistent with God's design in making them, bestowing them upon us, and restoring us to a right in them. I say restoring us to a right in them; for the original right in the creatures was forfeited in Adam, and no man can make other than an usurped use of them unless he be in Jesus Christ, and under him restored to the authorized use of them. And whoever is so restored to a right in the creatures is sensible that therein he enjoys an undeserved favour; which therefore he is disposed to use to the glory of God with thankfulness, reverence, and modesty. 'Every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.'

Where you see the disposition of heart wherewith believers are to use all the creatures of God, to wit,

*believingly*, as warranted to use them by the word of God; *reverently*, as looking up to God the giver for a blessing; and *thankfully*, as being God's unmerited gift. And thus our believer professes himself desirous to use every creature, whether meat, or drink, or raiment, or whatever blessing or comfort of life; and in fact he does thus use them all in general with godly fear and humble thankfulness, notwithstanding he has reason to complain of his coming short in the measure of watchfulness and praise wherewith he endeavours to glorify God in the use of his creatures.

*Thirdly*.—To believe in God the Maker of heaven and earth implies a disposition to regard and use ourselves both in soul and body as God's creatures to his glory. *Thy hands have made me and fashioned me: give me understanding, that I may learn thy commandments.* Which is as much as to say, 'I am  
' thy property, for I owe my whole being to thee;  
' and therefore I beseech thee to instruct me how I  
' shall use my whole self in such manner as shall  
' answer thy design in making me. Cause me to  
' glorify thee with every faculty of my soul, which is  
' thine in all the powers thereof. Let me know thee  
' and thy will, and contemplate thy glories in the  
' one and the other, in the use I make of my *under-*  
' *standing*; let my *memory* be the treasure-house of  
' thy works and ways, thy judgments and mercies,  
' thy promises, directions, and threatenings; let my  
' *will* be the counterpart of thine, pliable and submis-  
' sive to thy mind, choosing and refusing as thou  
' wouldst have me; let my *affections* all centre in

‘ thee, being withdrawn from the creature, and set  
 ‘ thyself up in my heart as the sole object of my de-  
 ‘ sire, my hope, my delight, my joy. Cause me also  
 ‘ to use every member of my body according to thy  
 ‘ mind, and in that very way which will best promote  
 ‘ thy glory. I have too long *yielded my members in-*  
 ‘ *struments of unrighteousness unto sin*, give me grace  
 ‘ to *yield them henceforward instruments of righteous-*  
 ‘ *ness unto the God* that made and fashioned them ;  
 ‘ that neither my hand act wickedness, nor my tongue  
 ‘ speak perversely, nor my feet carry me to sin, nor  
 ‘ mine eye look after iniquity, but every member in  
 ‘ its proper use and employment may be devoted unto  
 ‘ thee. *Give me understanding, that I may learn thy*  
 ‘ *commandments.*’

*Fourthly.*—To believe in God the Maker of heaven  
 and earth, is, in correspondence with his design of  
 glorifying himself in his creatures, to use in an humble  
 dependence all the powers of my soul and body, to-  
 gether with all my advantages and abilities, to his glory  
 in that station and calling which he has assigned me.  
 The glory of God in the creation is manifest in a  
 happy subserviency of his creatures in their several  
 places. The inanimate world sets us a pattern, the  
 sun knoweth his going down, the wind and storms  
 perform their commissions. The animal world join  
 in the instructive lesson, they wait all upon God ;  
 “ The young lions roar after their prey, and seek their  
 “ meat from God ; the sun ariseth, they gather them-  
 “ selves together, and lay them down in their dens.”  
 And shall man disturb the harmony of God’s works,



shall he forget his station, and refuse to serve his Creator in his generation? Shall the moral world only be in disorder; shall men and devils pervert the order of God, and cause confusion in his work? Shall they affect independency, and act as if God had not made them? Not so our believer. He desires to perform the part allotted him in the world. He desires to live the creature, and to be faithful in the station assigned him in the great universe; if he be a child, to be dutiful; if a parent or master, to be faithful in his house; if a minister, to dispense the word of life with all readiness of mind; if a man of business, to be diligent, honest, and cheerful in his employment. In short, whatever his place be, therein so to demean himself as that God may be glorified in the world which he has made for himself.

That all these things are really contained in a true belief in God, as Maker of heaven and earth, may appear from an attention to their case who have not the disposition described. For,

*First.*—Can they be said to have any belief in God as the Creator of themselves and all things, who have no eye to see God in his wonderful works surrounding them as they are on every side, have not the least regard to him, though they be the work of his hand, and to all intents and purposes live in the world as if there were no God? I have not the least doubt there are some who hear me that do not so much as once apply their minds to think of God for a whole day together, and for many days together, I had almost said for weeks together, for months, in short,

at all. This is rash and uncharitable, you say; for how can I possibly know this? What! can I tell what is in people's heart? Not exactly what *is* there; but their conduct tells me what *is not* there. Would they own the truth, they would confess they have no real deliberate thought or regard of God. How can it be, when they live as they do, following the world, and following their pleasures, their minds, thoughts, and hearts always taken up with some perverse thing? And can these believe in the God that made them? Though they pretend to say they do when they repeat the Creed, shall we, can we believe them, when they live daily as if they were their own makers and masters, as if God had no right over them, nor property in them? But there are others who are not so gross, men of speculation, who can read you fine lectures upon the power and wisdom of God in the works of creation in heaven and earth, and yet these are as far at least from the humble dependent spirit of creatures as the other. Human learning will furnish a man with many pretty and entertaining speculations; but it is grace only that teaches the heart to know its place in creation, to return to the dependent character, and, with true self-abasement as creatures and sinners, to own God the Maker of heaven and earth. Philosophical inquiries are widely different from spiritual and practical knowledge; and they who have amused themselves the most in nice researches into the works of nature, and made very just observations from thence upon the perfections of God, shall find at last, if they have gone no further, and have

not learnt to be humbled before the great God their Maker, that they have known nothing as they ought to know, and that the injured Maker of the world will not be satisfied with subtle speculations instead of the return of an apostate spirit, upon the offer of pardon in Jesus Christ, and by the grace ministered in him, unto the temper and conduct of creatures dependent upon him and bowing before him.

*Secondly.*—Does that person believe in God as the Maker of heaven and earth, who abuses God's creatures to his dishonour? You cannot but be sensible, that to believe in God as Creator is to pay some regard to him in that character, falling in with his design in making all things. But where is this regard, if we oppose the end of creation in the use of God's creatures? Was it God's design, in making food for our subsistence, that we should take occasion to indulge our palates, make a god of our bellies, or, as is sometimes done, eat almost to suffocation? Was drink provided for us to be used as it too commonly is? Had God any design thereby to draw us together that we might run into excess, to pass the glass from one to another till sober reason should leave us, to make us merry, as it is called; that is, unguarded and dissolute, and fit for any work the devil may have for us to do? What think you was God's purpose in giving us raiment? Think a little, I pray you, what it could possibly be. You that are so fond of outward adorning, of plaiting the hair (take notice it is the word of Scripture), of wearing of gold, and of putting on of apparel, ask your own consciences whether God

made these things for the use you make of them, which is, whether you will believe it or no, to pride yourselves upon your finery, to set yourselves out as so many shows to be gazed upon and admired, and to make the world think you persons of more than ordinary consideration? But there is no end of particulars. O when shall we learn to use the world as not abusing it! In the mean time, till we do, let us confess that we do not believe in God as Maker of heaven and earth.

*Thirdly.*—Can that person own God as his Creator, who abuses his soul in the love of sin, and his body in the practice of it? To say God made me, soul and body, and yet in soul and body to behave as if there was no relation between God and me, is in effect to strike myself out of God's creation. To say I believe God gave me my soul to glorify him, and yet to have neither knowledge, nor thought, nor love, nor desire of him in my heart, but the whole bent of my soul to be after worldly things, just as if God had not made me, and it was not my concern to glorify him with my spirit; at the same time, to employ every member of my body in such base services as are directly subversive of God's purpose in giving it to me; what are these but flat contradictions? And yet how much is this the practice of many who call God their Maker! Sirs, do you all verily judge that God gave you your soul and body for his use and glory? And do you all use them both with this design? What! is it the main care of all of you to give up your souls to God, to his glory, and your bodies also to him, to his glory? Why, when, I beseech you, did many of you think

of such a thing? When inquire how you might do it? When use any kind of endeavours towards it? When, I say, did you diligently inquire how God might be glorified in your spirit and body, which are his; when set yourself to the performance of it; when cast out of your heart such studies and pursuits as, instead of honouring, are disgraceful to God, praying and labouring that your soul might be furnished with those graces and dispositions which are his due and your duty; or when forego such and such a practice, because you found it contrary to God's glory; or set yourself to this and that duty, because you found God would be glorified by it? Sirs, own the truth, when did you ever think or act upon this plan, so evidently suited to, so essential to the just character of the creature? What! never? What! not for one week, one day, in your whole lives? If this has been your case, have you not been a blank in God's creation? A blank! yea, rather a blot. A foul blot in God's works, bearing upon your soul and body, in the face of the whole world, nay, in the presence of rejoicing devils, the reproach of God your Maker. Alas, my friends, how unlike Christ, the fairest among ten thousand! How was his soul moulded into this one heavenly impression stamped upon the whole of it; *glory to God!* And his life, how it followed in acts of universal, ceaseless, submission to the divine will! *Father*, he said, in the conclusion of the whole, *I have glorified thee upon earth.* Ah! my dear brethren, look upon this Jesus, and be confounded: What! cannot you take up the word of Christ? No;

not in the least desire, attempt, endeavour? Must you altogether say, God, I have dishonoured thee on earth? Then say not, “ I believe in God the Maker “ of heaven and earth.” Yet,

*Fourthly.*—Can they acknowledge God to be their Maker, who dishonour him in their special calling? All stations are God’s appointment, and, in that we are severally placed in, it is every man’s duty to glorify God, and to maintain the honour of God the Creator. To act our part therein perversely or negligently is to damage the beauty of God’s work, to disturb the order of God’s arrangement, and signally to disgrace him that made us. Can I own God so eminently to be the Maker of all things for his glory, as by my zeal, diligence, and fidelity in my proper station? Therefore can I otherwise so capitally dishonour him as by a contrary conduct? What then can we conceive of such as seem to have come to a conclusion that they have nothing to do; that because they need not work for a support, therefore they may with all reason be idle, live upon the labours of others, lie a burden upon the public, and no living man be the better for them any further than they cannot help their being so by unavoidable expenses? Can we think God made any man thus for nought; or that to be a gentleman is not as much a calling as to be a labourer; or that there are not duties as proper to the one of them as the other? Great ones, it seems, if their conduct be a safe rule to judge by, have the privilege of doing nothing, and are exempted from the curse laid by God on all the children of Adam, *In*

*the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground.* But is this privilege any where in Scripture really granted them? What shall we think of parents and masters of families, who know no other use of their authority than to gratify their own will, are incomparably more careful to maintain the fear of themselves than the fear of God in their houses, and regard not what example they set to those who are under them? What shall we think of indolent ministers, who care not how the flock be scattered, so themselves be fed? What shall we think of supine magistrates, who are proud of the honour of their office, but take no care to discharge the duties of it; suffering the sword of justice to sleep in its sheath, and not drawing it out to cut iniquity off, and to maintain true religion and virtue? What shall we think of men of business, who leave their shops to take their pleasure; abuse their time and substance in riotous living; and, while they are said to be of this and that profession, are known to have no other than that of idleness and extravagance? In short, if God made all things for his glory, and that glory can only be maintained by our subjection to his will and orders in our several allotments, how can God be glorified by those who are so far from seeking to honour God in their places that they neglect the duties of them? or how can such believe in God as their Maker?

On the whole, then, we conclude, that the true, plain, and practical sense and meaning of these words, is this: 'I believe God the Father, the Governor of

‘ the world, to be the Maker of it, for his own glory.  
‘ It is my desire that he may be glorified by all the  
‘ works of his hands. For my own part, since by  
‘ the power and grace of Jesus Christ I am brought  
‘ out of that horrible state of darkness, alienation, and  
‘ sin, wherein, with the whole fallen race of Adam, I  
‘ lay by nature, I am ready and do purpose to behave  
‘ towards God as his creature and subject in every  
‘ respect, cheerfully returning to my place under him  
‘ in his great creation, and determining to bring all  
‘ the glory to him that is in my power. With shame,  
‘ abasement, and reverence, I own his wisdom, power,  
‘ and goodness, in making me and all things out of  
‘ nothing, and I desire to think and act as one who  
‘ derives all I am and have from him, using all the  
‘ various blessings he has provided for me with thank-  
‘ fulness, acknowledgment, calling upon his name,  
‘ and due fear of dishonouring my Maker by using  
‘ them amiss. I regard myself as his workmanship,  
‘ formed to set forth his praise; and I yield up my  
‘ every power of soul and body to be employed unto  
‘ his glory according to his will; fully resolved never  
‘ again to give up my soul to those thoughts and  
‘ studies which pride, interest, and indulgence suggest,  
‘ nor my body to serve the base purposes which these  
‘ lusts have too much directed me to pursue; but  
‘ universally in both to remember and serve my  
‘ Creator. And inasmuch as God has honoured me  
‘ with a special place and station under him in his  
‘ creation, to that I am determined to have a special  
‘ regard, and to carry myself in it in such a manner



‘ that his honour may suffer no more damage through  
‘ my negligence and fault ; but, laying aside the con-  
‘ sideration of my own praise, or interest, or conve-  
‘ nience, and every other worldly respect, I do profess  
‘ and declare, that to promote his glory therein both  
‘ is, and by his grace shall be, my great endeavour  
‘ and aim. In one word, I judge it my bounden  
‘ duty, and it is my real choice, in every thing to  
‘ think and act as the creature of God, dependent  
‘ upon him and subservient to him. And this is  
‘ what I avow myself determined to do when I say,  
‘ *I believe in God the Maker of heaven and earth.*’

Take one word at parting. What a confusion has sin brought into God’s creation ! Angels began the apostacy, man has followed them. Who would think that God has made us, to see what we do ? Sin has subverted all. Sin has put creation into disorder. What is become of the glory of God in his works ? But I see the restorer of the breach. Immanuel is come to restore all things, to exalt the Creator, by bringing in to their allegiance some of the proud apostates, and to make the others know with the sinners of hell that God shall be glorified. What an undertaking ! Look at your hearts, my friends, and see what an undertaking ! Who is sufficient for it ? Why, Jesus is ! He that brought beauty, harmony, and order, out of the first chaos, is able to do it. He can, he will, he has already in part. Look again to your hearts, believers, and see if he has not ; for your Creator again reigns there. In part, you say ? but it shall be wholly. Witness the first-born which

are written in heaven, the spirits of just men made perfect. Yes, the day is coming when ye shall say, what hath the hand of the Lord wrought! To him that was able to subdue all things to himself, to him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. *Amen.*

## S E R M O N XII.

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ACTS xvi. 30, 31.

*What must I do to be saved? And they said, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.*

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WE have gone through the several points contained under the first article of the Creed, and which are relative to God the Father. The second branch has regard to God the Son, and his office as Redeemer.

Now the subject-matter contained herein is this. *First*, You profess your belief in Jesus as your all-sufficient Saviour. And then, *Secondly*, You declare the grounds upon which such your belief in him as your Saviour doth stand, to wit, 1. As having been duly anointed to this office, implied in the name, Christ; 2. As being the *only Son* of the Father; 3. As being *our Lord*; 4. As having been *conceived of the Holy Ghost*; and *born of the Virgin Mary*; having *suffered under Pontius Pilate*; been *crucified, dead, and buried*; and having *descended into hell*. 5. As having *risen the third day from the dead*, and *ascended into heaven*; at *sitting on the right hand of God the Father Almighty*; and as *coming from thence to judge the quick and the dead*. The word Jesus, you see,

must be carried forward to all the points that follow ; and the service is, I believe in Jesus, as being the Anointed, as being the only Son, as being our Lord, as conceived, born, crucified, and dead ; as risen, ascended, exalted, and coming to judgment. His mediatorial sufficiency depends on all this together, and therefore there is not so much as one point to be omitted, consistently with a real belief in Jesus as a complete Saviour.

The first and great point, which is the result of all the rest, is, *I believe in Jesus.*

The word Jesus, every one knows, signifies *Saviour.* And therefore, when I say I believe in Jesus, I declare that I believe in him as my Saviour ; which nevertheless is impossible any further than I am both sensible of my want of salvation, in regard of those things wherein he is a Saviour, and also that in all those respects he is sufficient and suited to my purpose. To talk of believing in a Saviour, when I really find not a want of a Saviour, is to talk nonsense ; and to declare that I believe in Jesus as sufficient every way to save me, when, being unacquainted with those sure grounds upon which his saving power stands, I am not really satisfied that he is able to save me, is to assert a direct palpable falsehood. Consequently, whoever says truly I believe in Jesus, is as well acquainted with his being in a miserable, helpless, and undone state in himself, as that there is a fulness and sufficiency in Jesus to help him completely out of it. Without the former, namely, an acquaintance with our misery and helplessness,

there is an absolute impossibility of believing in Jesus; and it is only in proportion with our acquaintance with the latter, namely, his sufficiency, that we can exalt him in our hearts as the Saviour we profess him to be unto us. As to the grounds upon which the person here speaking is confirmed in the sufficiency of Jesus to save him, they will be considered afterwards; here they are supposed to be known and believed, and not less the professor's sense of his misery and helplessness in himself. So that the words are the declaration of one, who, having found misery in himself, and help in one that is mighty to save, openly avows that Jesus is all his salvation. Now in this plain, reasonable, and, I conceive, incontestable state of the matter, it appears, that in the words before us are implied an acknowledgment of all that misery from which Jesus is said in the Scripture to be come to save us; and also that the whole hope and confidence of the soul are lying on him. And so of course to say, I believe in Jesus, is as much as to declare,

*First.*—I believe in him as my Deliverer from the power of darkness and ignorance.

*Secondly.*—I believe in him as my Deliverer from the curse of the law, due unto me, and threatened against me for my sins.

*Thirdly.*—I believe in him as my Deliverer from all my spiritual enemies.

*Fourthly.*—I believe in him as my great, final, and full Deliverer at his judgment-day.—In all which points it will be necessary to observe, as we go along, both that there is a renunciation of ourselves, and

also an acceptation of Jesus; and at the same time to inquire how it stands with ourselves concerning it.

*First.*—I believe in him as my Deliverer from the power of darkness and ignorance. Man by nature is in a state of blindness and ignorance. All that he can see of spiritual things, without the light of the Word and Spirit, is but that confused traditionary knowledge that has been handed down from generation to generation, the effect of which is little other than self-condemnation; and even that knowledge I say *traditionary*, not acquired by the exercise of man's reason, but received by information from others, though indeed capable of being reasoned upon afterwards, and so of considerable improvement. Man, since the fall, is (without the help of foreign light) in a state of utter spiritual darkness; a reasonable creature, but incapable of discerning spiritual things by any exercise of his unassisted reason; nay, and when that foreign light is afforded him, he cannot be benefited, or understand the things that are declared by it, unless by a supernatural influence both his will be stirred up to seek into it, and his mind enlightened to receive it. This is the Scripture-account of the matter; where we are said *to be darkness*, to be *without God in the world*, to be *without hope*, and the wisest of us, *by all our wisdom, not to know God*. Of this his natural estate of blindness and ignorance our professor is made duly sensible; as he is also that Jesus, by the light of the Word and Spirit, is the only one who can direct his steps. He ascribes it to Jesus that he was at first enlightened whilst he lay in his dark state of sin and

ignorance, and was made to discern and see the sinfulness and misery of that condition, and the way out of it prepared by the mercy of God, and executed by the Only-Begotten made flesh. And he is equally well advised, by self-experience, that, left to himself, he should instantly lose sight of all the glorious things belonging to his peace, which are now so evidently and delightfully before his eyes; and that it is the Lord therefore who hath made, and still makes, his darkness to be light.

Now here you see is a manifest renunciation of the sufficiency of human reason, both to discover to us any of the things of God, and more especially the way of peace in the most needed Redeemer. The true believer in Jesus has no high conceit of his own powers, as they now are in his fallen state. He cannot cry up human reason to make revelation needless; no, nor to sit as a judge upon the declarations of infinite wisdom, measuring them by the pretended rule of what is called natural religion, and rejecting what does not come within the reach of man's understanding. He gladly accepts the offered light; is well content to take any thing upon God's authority; waits continually to be taught the will of God and the way of salvation; and will trust neither to himself nor others for the truth of divine things, but only to Jesus, *that great Prophet that should come into the world.* But this, I fear, is not the common way.

Those were they, a long while ago, who disclaimed all teaching of the Spirit as mere pretence, or, as they were pleased to call it, cant and enthusiasm. Indeed

pretensions thereto, without the word, are no better than enthusiasm. But if the Spirit, without the word, be delusion, the word, without the Spirit, to the unassisted mind in its natural and corrupted state, is dark, unprofitable, and unsanctifying. Nevertheless, reason has been thought sufficient of itself to fathom and unfold the deep things of God, And see what the rejection of the Spirit has come to; depraved reason, because not able to comprehend, has mangled and tortured the great doctrines of the Gospel; taken away the whole power of the word, and left it an unanimated and unanimating lump, a little better, and that is all, than the dry philosophy of the Heathen. The wise and the prudent, they that would be so without God's making, have very reasonably and justly had the distinguishing and quickening truths of the Gospel hid from them, while those very doctrines have, in the plainest manner, been revealed unto babes by the Spirit, opening their understandings that they might understand the Scriptures. But while man's wisdom, by disclaiming the illumination of the Spirit, at least in practice if not in express terms, has put down God's word, I mean as to the distinguishing and vital doctrine of it, the people have suffered irreparable damage; the power of godliness has died away, and even moral honesty and decency, being stripped of their main supports, have been forced to give ground to a general libertinism and licentiousness. I will not conceal the truth; the present dissoluteness of manners among us began in the exploding the operations of the Spirit; so the Scriptures



being a sealed book, because the key to them was thrown away, every man set his blind reason to interpret them; mysteries were set apart or lowered to nothing; and the Gospel came forth not unlike a painted sun on a canvass, bearing some poor resemblance of the original, but absolutely without light or heat. But this is not all; our forefathers, in the pride of their reason, having refused the aid of the Spirit, and thereby missed of the whole spirituality of God's word, we of this age, their still wiser children, have too many of us proceeded further, and to the refusal of the Spirit boldly added a renunciation of the word also. Reason, it seems, cannot digest many things that are there; some things in it are not to be comprehended, and how can we believe what we cannot comprehend? Others are objectionable; we do not see the reasonableness and consistency of them; others are contrary to our notions of things, neither can we reconcile it how God should determine and direct as he is sometimes there said to do. Every little pretender to knowledge and debate will have his fling at the Bible; reason is set up in its place. Reason, that noble faculty, which, it seems, is capable of reaching through the universe; of sounding the very depths of God's government; can, as if brought up with him, nicely adjust the measure of all his counsels, determine the reason of all his doings, and exactly point out what is fit for him to expect from his creatures; in short, do every thing, except it be the one needful thing, find out a way how the poor guilty sinner shall be saved.

The contest, you see, is between reason and Jesus ; whether the fall has left our understandings darkened and insufficient to any spiritual discernment, and we need to be taught of Jesus, who is come, by his word and Spirit, to teach us all things which pertain unto life and godliness ; or whether we stand not in any need of this his teaching, having power sufficient in our unassisted reason to discern the way of life in the Scriptures without the Spirit, or to discover a scheme of religion for ourselves without the help of the one or the other. It is evident that they who set up reason against the Spirit or the word, cannot take Christ for their Teacher ; neither can they say, with an honest conscience, *I believe in Jesus*, since one grand point of the salvation which he claims as his property to give us, and which we, when we say we believe in him, declare that we hold from him, is deliverance from darkness and ignorance concerning all the things of God. The point is of the very first importance. In fact, nothing can be right if we fail here. Reason must first yield, otherwise we dispute every step of Gospel-salvation ; we quarrel at the justice of God's sentence against us as sinners ; cannot be brought to think we are such helpless creatures as God tells us we are ; and at no rate can digest either his method of justifying us by the righteousness of another, or those other self-denying duties which the Gospel enjoins us. The pride of reason must bow, else the salvation of the Gospel will never take place. *We must become fools if we will be wise* ; and, in order that we may submit ourselves to Christ's teaching, we

must put on the temper of little children, who, because they know nothing, are pliable to receive every thing from their parents and teachers. . And till we do this, or any further than we do it, coming wholly for instruction to Christ's word, and praying for his Spirit, let us not presume to say what contradicts our practice, *I believe in Jesus.* But,

*Secondly.*—I believe in Jesus implies this also, “ I believe in him as my Deliverer from the curse of the law due to me, and threatened against me for my sins. I acknowledge myself a sinner, conceived in sin, the deadly body of which remains within me; I cannot do any thing as I ought; as formerly, so now I am daily sinning in thought, word, and deed, insomuch that at no time, nor in any one instance, have I been able, or am I now able, to answer the high, but most holy and desirable, demands of the law. I cannot make any claim to life by my own doings; for I do not what the law requires of me. On that footing there is nothing before me but death, which God, I am satisfied, has in perfect righteousness and justice appointed to be the wages of sin; neither have I the least remedy, help, or hope in myself. I cannot make the injured God satisfaction; in no way can I do this. Not by better obedience, certainly all thought of that is vain; it would not cancel past offences, and the wages of every sin of my life is death: death, which may not be remitted, which must be endured; while also every day and hour I am sinning afresh, and adding to the number of my pro-

“ vocations and the load of my guilt. I cannot there-  
“ fore make God satisfaction by better obedience.  
“ No, nor would my endurance of ten millions of  
“ years’ imprisonment in hell retrieve the disgrace my  
“ sins have brought upon him. The wrath to come  
“ is eternal, because injured Majesty can never be  
“ satisfied by any measure of punishment laid upon  
“ sinners. There is then utterly no hope in myself;  
“ but I have heard of Jesus; I know him to be the  
“ Son of God; I am satisfied his business in the  
“ world was to save sinners; I am assured that, in-  
“ finite God as he is, he took up our nature; in that  
“ nature, he put all possible and more than con-  
“ ceivable honour upon the law by his obedience  
“ unto it; and by his death made such a satisfaction  
“ to God’s justice as ten thousand times ten thousand  
“ hells could not equal. Him God has accepted in  
“ his atonement for sinners; for I see him for his  
“ obedience unto death exalted to glory and immor-  
“ tality, as the representative of believing sinners. I  
“ hear, in consideration of that death, the most blessed  
“ promises issued out from the court of heaven, and  
“ recorded in that book which shall outlive the world.  
“ God himself has told me, *that all that believe in*  
“ *him shall not perish, but have everlasting life.* Yea,  
“ he has commanded me, upon the peril of my soul,  
“ *to believe on the name of his only-begotten Son.*  
“ Since then God will have it so, and will get him-  
“ self glory by freely justifying the ungodly, I have  
“ humbly taken him at his word, and do put in my  
“ claim to his pardon and acceptance in consideration

“ of the obedience and death of Jesus. Hither am I  
“ come for refuge, and here do I rest my soul upon  
“ the Redeemer’s righteousness. Confessing my sins,  
“ I lay my hand upon his head, and ask the offered  
“ mercy, and proclaim this to be all my salvation;  
“ while in the sight of all my guilt, in the prospect  
“ of death, and judgment, and hell, I joyfully take up  
“ my word, and say, I believe in Jesus. Let others  
“ seek salvation and rest their hope where they will,  
“ I believe in Jesus.” .

Here you find is a plain renunciation of all self-righteousness, and as plain and full acceptance of the righteousness of Jesus. And, in truth, what an absurdity is it, to declare a belief in Jesus for pardon and acceptance with God, when we are cleaving, either in whole or in part, unto a pretended righteousness of our own? You cannot but observe, that to accept Christ’s righteousness is to disclaim our own, as utterly insufficient; and when we say, I believe in Jesus, what do we other than publish our relinquishing all hope from the one, and our placing all hope in the other; since it is so evident that the point before us is a matter of Christian faith, and that, as persons saved by grace, we do hereby acknowledge our consent to such salvation? Yet, after all, this is sooner said than done. There are many things standing in the way of our saying, in sincerity of heart, I believe in Jesus as my Deliverer from the curse of the law due to me and threatened against me for my sins. Wherefore we shall do well seriously to inquire into

this business. I would ask therefore two very plain questions.

1.—Are we all truly made sensible that we have no righteousness of our own? By righteousness is meant a conformity with the law of God in heart and life. Whoever can produce this conformity with the law of God is certainly righteous; has a righteousness of his own upon which he may safely stand, and has no manner of need of the righteousness of Jesus the Saviour. But then you must take notice, this must be a *perfect* conformity of heart and life, and that *at all times*, for the law speaks but one language, and admits of no abatements. Should there be outward perfect conformity, yet, if the inward be wanting, that could not avail; yea, and though there should be outward and inward both, yet, if it were not always so, we could not pretend any right, as sinless. Upon this state of the case, every man without exception is ready to own, “I am not come up to this, we are all “sinners.” Even they who do not see their hearts, and the ocean of iniquity that is there, cannot help owning that in word and deed they have many times sinned; and they who do know their hearts will be as ready to own that matters have been a great deal worse with them. Now you would be apt to think, when people talk at this rate, they do very readily disclaim all self-righteousness, and lean on nothing within themselves. But in truth it is no such matter, we have many a shift under all this acknowledgment of guilt to make ourselves easy. We have the art of

making small account of sins, and great account of duties ; putting out the eye of conviction by the many good things we seemingly do, and teaching our consciences to say, they are not such mighty matters in which we are to blame. We have a strange dexterity in finding out excuses, and so letting the thing pass as if it were nothing ; “ It is true I was very angry, “ but they provoked me, and the like.” We have a trick of forgetfulness ; commit sin, and, in a day or two, all is as if we had never done amiss. We are very ready at comparisons ; “ O I would not do as “ such-an-one does for the world ! What will the “ world come to ? What ! have people lost all shame ?” We are ready to put one thing against another, as the saying is ; “ True, I have done so and so, but then, “ in other things, no one can say any harm of me ; “ for I am sure no one can say I am whore, thief, or “ drunkard.” There is no end of those inventions which pride will be suggesting to patch up a sort of righteousness, upon which people will sleep as quietly as if the law had laid no charge against them, or as if they were secured under the righteousness of Christ. Now, brethren, are none of you upon this footing ? Are none of you thinking pretty well of yourselves upon the whole, and for one thing and another hoping that you are in a tolerable case, although you have not seriously seen your lost condition as sinners, nor come to Jesus to save you from the wrath that is to come ? This is no uncommon case, it is most certain ; and if it were the case of none of us, we should not

lead the cold, selfish, lukewarm, indifferent lives that too many of us do.

2.—But if we are really sensible that we have no righteousness of our own, are we not going about to seek one as well as we can? It is a common language I know upon sick beds, “O, if I recover, I will never do as I have done.” And, without question, what some do in sickness others practise in health, to wit, stifle convictions by resolutions.

Then, again, you may be apt to think in yourself, “Well, for my part, I have done with pleasures and company-keeping; it is not with me now as it was formerly; I have done with the world; I read my Bible, and keep my church, and say my prayers. Surely things are altered with me much for the better.”

Or you may go about to set up your own righteousness this way, “Come, I will be charitable, I will give to the poor,” thinking to make amends for your sins by your liberality. Or this way again, “O, if I could but forsake and get the better of such a thing, if it were not for such a particular sin that I so often fall into! That must be forsaken, and then all will be right.” Devices of this kind are very natural to the pride of man, and which, I doubt not, every person here present has found his heart busily employed in at one time or other. But, in the mean time, they are but so many tricks to heal up the wounds of a gnawing conscience, to stop true conviction of sin, and to keep us from Christ, without



whom we perish. Can any purpose, or even practice of reformation, with never so many good things performed by us, make up for old sins, that is (for nothing less will do), make them in truth to be none? If not, if they are still our sins, are not we still chargeable with them? Who should, but ourselves? And has not God said, *The wages of sin is death?* How then shall that sentence be annulled? There are two capital objections to this scheme which we are considering. The one is, that a perfect conformity to God's law *now*, could I attain it, would make no satisfaction for *past* iniquities; for, in that case, I should only do my present duty, and consequently leave the debt of old sins just where it was, absolutely undischarged. The other, that I do not in fact now conform to God's law, no nor ever shall, according to the strict spirituality of it; so that, in reality, the longer I live, the more I enlarge my debt, and the obligation to punishment. But, notwithstanding this, many still, who have not a righteousness of their own, will be for getting one as well as they can, vainly hoping to stand in it before God.

Now, in either of these cases, you must needs see there can be no real belief in Jesus Christ for pardon and acceptance with God. If either we conceit we have a righteousness of our own, or are seeking to get one, we are quite out of God's way, of justifying the ungodly by the righteousness of Jesus. And, I beseech you, let us consider; we say, we believe in Jesus: but do we so, when we trust in ourselves? Is it possible I should make both my own righteousness

and that of Jesus my foundation at once? The truth is, we do not go closely to the bottom with ourselves to see the truth of our case, we have and can have no legal righteousness. That God knows, and therefore in mercy has provided one for us in Jesus. But, if you doubt this, state the matter fairly before your own conscience. Have you ever answered, or can you now answer, the demands of the law? If you say, no; (and that you must say, if you know but never so little of God's law and of your own heart;) then it is plain to your conscience that you are destitute of the laws of righteousness, and are a sinner. And thereupon the question is, how will you get God's favour? What! by your own righteousness, when you say you have and can have none? or by the righteousness of Jesus, which God has provided for you? God's favour is what you want. But then, since you are a sinner, you have no right to it, and must be thankful to take it in God's own way; otherwise you will go without it, and your sins, guilt, and punishment, rest on your own head. It is the thought of that should alarm you. O think of it with all soberness. You have sinned, and Death standeth at the door. How great a death! and how eternal! O think of your sins, and think of your sentence, and think how you can possibly escape, if you neglect so great salvation!

## S E R M O N XIII.

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ACTS xvi. 30, 31.

*What must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.*

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TO believe in Jesus implies this, I believe in him as my Deliverer from all my spiritual enemies. The great spiritual enemy, under which all the others fight, and by means of which they bring us into any danger, is original sin, variously called, *the flesh*, the *law of sin*, the body of this death and of sin, and many times *sin* simply, by way of eminence; that principle of sin in fallen man, which, on the one hand, is enmity against God, not enduring either his service or his presence; and, on the other, is perpetually soliciting the soul to sensual, earthly, and devilish things; by its perverse motions filling the imagination with sinful and vain thoughts, and thereby blinding the understanding that it should not discern spiritual things, and biassing the will that it should not choose them. These effects, in the full power of them, does the principle of sin produce in the unregenerate; while they, who are indeed regenerate, experience the baleful influence of it still abiding in them, both in keep-

ing them from that nearness and perfectness of heart with God which they earnestly long for, and ceaselessly exciting in them its motions of pride, wordliness, and carnality. It is by means of this principle that the men or things of the world have influence and power to stop and retard the believer in his progress to glory; or that the devil can gain any effectual opportunity to dismay or seduce us. Finally, to be delivered from this body of sin is the believer's first desire; *I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness.* But, in the mean time, he earnestly wishes as well to be kept from the power of it (so that he may be always enabled to oppose its suggestions whenever upon occasion, from without, of the world, or the devil, they rise up in him pleading for indulgence), as to find its influence abating and its strength declining from day to day.

This shews you what the believer means by his spiritual enemies. And the ground of his believing in Jesus for dominion over them is twofold; partly because he knows and finds that he cannot of himself either obtain or keep the mastery of them; and partly because he knows the Saviour can.—He knows he cannot himself, from the very nature of the thing, because it is the property of this principle of sin to keep him from God, and to lead him quite the other way in a course of indulgence, covetousness, and pride of one sort or another; and this principle is in him, and actually constitutes his present nature, so that it must of course, as every creature's nature does, reign over him, if left to himself, without either will or power

in him to restrain it. Nor is this all the proof he has of his insufficiency hereunto. Experience has taught him, and does teach him, the same thing. The body of sin has had, and still has, its weight. It always keeps him from living so near to God as he would, and from being disposed towards him as he wishes and ought to be; while also he finds every day, that those sinful motions which are proper to it are too many, and too busy, that he should be able in any one instance to keep his conduct undefiled by them, or free, in many sad instances, from such success as abundantly shames and grieves him in seeing thereby what he is. Scripture also adds its testimony unto his absolute inability to subdue his spiritual enemies, asserting in the plainest terms, *that without Christ we can do nothing*, assuring us, that *in us, that is, in our flesh, dwelleth no good thing*, and ascribing all the good that is wrought in any of us unto God, who, it is said, *himself worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure*.—But what he knows himself unable to do for himself, he knows Jesus is able to do for him, who was raised up, *that we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us, so that being delivered we might serve him, without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our life*. In which regard Jesus is said to be *made of God unto us sanctification*. This is a character in which he is represented by the prophet: *He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offer-*

*ing in righteousness. Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord.* His fulfilment of which is attested by the evangelist in the person of himself and of all believers, *Of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.* As to this point, therefore, he who professes belief in Jesus doth thereby disclaim dependence on his own strength (if the term be not improper, since in spiritual things, and against his spiritual enemies, he has evidently none), and declare his trust is in the strength of Jesus. How this matter stands with us in fact ought to be considered. The point is, have we a real experience that there is a principle of sin in us, which must absolutely prevent us from every thing good, if we are left to ourselves, neither enabled nor supported by the grace of Christ?

If we find such a principle of sin in us, the tendency of which is to keep us from God, and fix us upon the pursuits of this present world, then the case is clear, and we must seek help where we can obtain it. But can we seek that help, when either we deny there is any such principle in us, or, though we own it in speculation, yet have not concern enough about our souls to take any care it may not rule over us? There are they who deny it, though themselves are among the most pregnant proofs of it in the whole of their conduct, being evidently led along by principles of pride, or covetousness, or sensual inclination; which it were hard to conceive how they could have contracted by the mere force of custom; and the uniformity of which in all the children of men abundantly

shews to be the effects of that same one principle of sin which is in the nature of all alike, and makes our hearts as like one another as our faces. But though you own your fallen state doctrinally, what can it avail while you have no concern to be converted unto God, and daily renewed in your mind by the power of the Holy Ghost? How, in that case, can you believe in Jesus? You may declare a renunciation of your own strength, and an acceptance of his; but, if all be in your head, you are just where you were, and be assured, once for all, Jesus is no Saviour of yours. Yet, my dear brethren, what proof can many of you give that it is at all otherwise with you? If you were really sensible that you wanted the grace of Christ to deliver you from the power and dominion of original sin, supported, as it is, upon its throne, by the wiles of the devil and the enjoyments of the world; and if at the same time you heartily desired to be set free from that detestable service, would you not, knowing that Jesus alone was able to help you, make very frequent and importunate applications for his aid? But now, say in conscience, when did you so? When did you fall down before him and sincerely beseech him that he would vouchsafe to deliver you from that body of sin you found in you? I do not ask when you did something which you call saying your prayers, and doing your duty (that you may do a great deal of after a certain manner, and be even nothing the better), but I ask, when you prayed for a new heart; to be set at liberty from sin; to have that pride which is in you done away; your covetousness mor-

tified; your love of pleasure, company, and indulgence crucified? What! never? No, I am perfectly assured, never to any purpose; never heartily and honestly. You have not done it, and you do not do it; you know you do not, and I know, as well as you, that you do not. Nay, you are saying, does the man pretend to know our hearts, can he know what passes in our chambers and closets? Yes, verily, thus far I certainly know, and so may any one else, that neither in your chamber, nor in the church, nor any where else, you really pray for a new heart, and deliverance from the dominion of your sinful nature; for, if you did, you would be most assuredly set free; since God has promised to give the Spirit to them that ask him; and yet you are not set free, but are as much as ever the slave of your own lusts; as much as ever without God in the world; proud, wilful, impatient, earthly, covetous, idle, vain, intemperate, as much as ever. And yet you will be saying, I believe in Jesus. Surely you can have no thought of what you are doing when you say so, since it is so manifestly false, and the contrary is this moment so incontestably evident to your own conscience. O, sir, consider how that word, *I believe in Jesus*, which you have so often said in vain in the midst of God's people, and as if you had been one of their happy number, consider how that word must rise up in the judgment against you! how it must shame, confound, and condemn you in the face of the dishonoured Jesus, sitting on the clouds of heaven, with the assembled world before him, attended by the whole host of ministering an-



gels, and holding up the righteous balance to weigh your doings, in order to the allotment of your place of future eternal residence, whether it shall be heaven or hell!

*Fourthly.*—To believe in Jesus implies this also; I believe in him as my full, final, and eternal Deliverer: which is as much as to say, I look for a perfection of holiness in my soul, a glorious resurrection of my body, and a life everlasting in him. *Christ is not only of God made unto us wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification, but also redemption;* which, as it stands distinguished from the other three, has reference to the final completion and finishing of his work of salvation, begun in the present exercise of his offices towards us, as our Prophet, Priest, and King, by whom we are now (as many as believe) taught, justified, and sanctified. Perfection of happiness is impossible without these two things. *First,* Perfect holiness in the soul. *Without holiness no man shall see the Lord;* absolute unholiness is a total disqualification for any such sight of God as brings the least measure of happiness along with it: and therefore perfect holiness is absolutely necessary to perfect happiness in God. And this our professor waits for in Jesus, and by the operation of his mighty grace. He cannot effect it of himself: as well might he have made himself out of nothing. It is a divine work, and is called *creation* in the Scriptures. In the old creation God finished that whole glorious work in six days, but the perfecting this unto its whole beauty, glory, and order, is carried on progressively, beginning in regeneration,

which is the first implanting in the soul of the fallen creature that principle of grace, which, gaining strength by perpetual influences of the Spirit who first begat it, and by various discipline of every kind suited thereunto, grows up towards that perfect state to which it shall be advanced in the future world; when, besides other dispensations in this life, which have tended and been made effectual to the daily mortification of the body of sin, the whole of it shall have been utterly destroyed by death, and Jesus *present the church unto himself, holy, without blemish, spot, wrinkle, or any such thing*, in virtue of that most certain but inexpressible union subsisting between him and it.

Now, my friends, what can the polishing of philosophy do in so great a business? There has been much talk about governing the passions, and restraining the appetites, and bringing up the mind to a manly steadiness by the force of reason. This was well attempted, indeed, by those who had no greater light. But, alas, how unsuccessfully! The principle of sin, which is in all, only took another road; and by the excess of pride laid restraint on the rage of inclination. To be born again, to be perfected in holiness, is the work of God. In vain may we think of attempting it by our own powers. As well might an angel essay burning up the universe, to make a new heaven and earth out of its ashes. But to know what the work is confounds all human confidence, and every soul sensible of its own insufficiency cries out, *Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit*

*within me!* To renounce ourselves here seems to be but little; to believe in the power of Jesus to restore us to the perfection of holiness is a greater matter; but the main thing of all is, to be looking, waiting for, longing after, and striving to obtain this perfect holiness. I believe in Jesus to perfect my spirit in holiness, implies indeed a renunciation of all help in myself for it; but then it implies more, namely, that I am expecting it at the hand of Jesus, that it is my grand object and aim that he may purge and purify my soul daily, and at last finish his work, because I earnestly long to be fit for God; to be perfectly like him; to have done with sin for ever; and to be as the blessed angels, whose souls bear the exactest impression of God's glorious perfections, who see his face, and are infinitely happy in fulfilling his commandments and hearkening to the voice of his words. This is the main point. Without this, all pretended belief of the power of Jesus to restore our fallen nature is but fancy and speculation, leaving us, where it found us, in our fallen state, unmeet for God, and what then meet for? Ah! brethren, ye know; ye certainly know. Ye have heard of fallen angels: and what are they meet for? It is for everlasting fire their unholy souls are fit; and, furious as they are, they tremble in the expectation of it. And, what! have you no better hope? Is this also your expectation, to have your portion with devils? Sirs, there are but two places that I ever heard of in the eternal world, heaven and hell. Now as many of you as

are unholy are not fit for heaven ; but ye are fit for hell : ye carry every qualification for it daily about you. You may think what you please, but a spirit that stands out against God's government, and will not stoop to his law and providence ; a spirit of pride and high-mindedness, that seeks itself, and takes to itself the praise and glory of every thing ; a spirit of ambition, that wants to make a figure, and to hold others in subjection ; a spirit of anger, revenge, and bitterness ; a spirit of resentment and implacableness ; a spirit of envy and jealousy, is a state of qualification for hell ; and what makes any man meet for the society of those malignant spirits, who shall be shut up therein for ever, and eternally prevented from vexing any others but their associates with these horrid dispositions. And are any of us preparing for hell, making ourselves daily more meet for that terrible place ? None designedly ; but every soul of us really, who is not seeking after holiness by the power of the Holy Ghost. It is awful to think what a condition many of us are in ! For are we all seeking holiness ? All of us seeking the mortification of our corrupt affections, and the renewal of our hearts after God's image and likeness ? It is impossible. Can it be ? What ! when some are mad after pleasure, and some are mad after company, and some are mad after money ? When we live in the practice of known sins, and in the neglect of known duties ? When we will not bear to be told our faults, or, if we must bear to hear them, take no care to mend them ? When, in

short, it is so evident that the pursuit of holiness is not our main concern, and any thing that looks like it is but taken up by-the-by? Yet surely they have made the better choice, who are seeking the inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away; and who, instead of making provision for the flesh to fulfil its lusts, and of laying up treasures upon earth, are preparing for glory, and laying up for their souls treasures of grace that will never wax old, but endure unto life everlasting. These are they, and these only, who can truly say, I believe in Jesus.— This is one qualification for perfect happiness, namely, perfection of holiness in the soul. *Secondly*, The other is, a spiritualized body, which may not only enjoy perfect health and vigour, but also, instead of being a clog to the soul, as the case now is, may be fitted to assist and serve it in all its holy operations and employments. Such is the now glorified body of Jesus unquestionably, and such shall be the resurrection-body of all his saints, for he shall fashion them like unto his glorious body by his mighty power. Of this point I say nothing further at present, as it will have a distinct consideration in the end of the Creed. Only suitably to our purpose I remark, that Jesus must give this glorified body; for surely no man can take it up of himself, and that it is what our professor waits for at his hands. The glorious prospect refreshes his spirit under present pain and approaching dissolution. “ *I know that my Redeemer liveth, he is ready* “ *to say on every pressing occasion, and that he shall* “ *stand at the latter day on the earth; and though*

“ *after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my  
flesh shall I see God.*”

“ And when that happy day shall be come, when  
the last enemy (glorious thought, the last! there-  
fore Satan shall have been put under my feet before,  
therefore sin shall have been destroyed before, there-  
fore all danger of hell shall have been past before),  
when the last enemy shall be destroyed, then what  
remains for me but an endless weight of glory? I  
shall see God, I shall see him as he is, I shall be  
like him, I shall be for ever with the Lord. How  
glorious then my services, I shall sing the song of  
the Lamb for ever. I shall rehearse to listening  
saints the story of my salvation; and provoke at-  
tending spirits to join my praises. I shall sit at  
the feet of my Lord, secure, happy, ravished with  
unutterable joy everlastingly. Glorious expectation!  
But when, my soul, shall these things be? Why,  
the last enemy is death, and death is near at hand.  
It is but till death, my soul, and then all thy sorrows  
cease, all behind is glory. Be steadfast, my soul;  
thy hope is not in vain. O the love, the power, of  
Jesus! Jesus, save me! thou art able to save me  
every way: thou art all my salvation. Here I am,  
Jesus! I believe in thee, as the guide of my feet,  
as the Lord my righteousness, as the Lord my  
strength, as my full and final Deliverer from all my  
enemies, I believe in thee; and, renouncing all  
other help, unto thee I commend my soul.”

Let us now collect together the whole, and see in  
one view what is the full force and meaning of these

words, I believe in Jesus. I am a fallen creature, the offspring of sinful Adam, every way wretched and helpless, ignorant, guilty, impotent, and without hope in the future eternal world. But I know there is a Saviour, Jesus, who, I am well assured from the word of God, and from what I am told therein of his person, offices, and transactions, is fully able to help and save me. I have heard his free and full invitations, and, being encouraged by them, I do, as my duty is, take him to be my Saviour, renouncing all hope from myself or any other beside him. And accordingly I do hereby declare, in the presence of God and of his church, that I avouch Jesus for my Saviour; that I have no allowed dependence on my own wisdom to instruct me in the things relative to the interests of my soul; but that I do implicitly give myself up to the words of Christ, desiring to be directed into the knowledge of them by the illumination of his Spirit, and determining that however they be above my comprehension, or contrary to my pride and inclinations, I will receive them as the only rule of my faith and practice. I do further confess, what I steadfastly believe, and whereon I rest my soul, that in the obedience and death of Jesus there is hope alone for poor guilty sinners like myself: I disclaim all other confidence. I own, in this most public manner, that I have taken refuge in the Redeemer's righteousness; and whatever boldness I now have to call upon God as a Father, or whatever prospect of being with him as my God for ever, it has no other foundation, I desire it may never, and I am fully persuaded it can

never have any other foundation than the obedience and death of Jesus. And as I have taken him to be my righteousness, so also to be my strength. I know myself insufficient to any thing good. I ascribe it to Jesus that I am not still dead in trespasses and sins, that I have the least grain of faith in God, or spark of love towards him in me. I am perfectly satisfied that without him I can do nothing, and that his grace is sufficient for me. Sincerely desiring deliverance from all sin, and the sanctification of my whole spirit, soul and body, to God's use and glory; I do and desire always to depend upon him to work this all-effectually upon me by his holy Spirit, waiting for it in prayer, patience, and thankfulness. And, finally, I avow him to be all my salvation for the eternal world, to perfect my soul in holiness, to raise my body from the dust, and to give me everlasting life. In the full force and meaning of all which, and of whatever else lies within the scope of his saving power, I say here, in the presence of you all, *I believe in Jesus.*

Now, brethren, can we adopt these words in this their proper meaning? Ah, that we could all of us! how happy should we then be! For, verily, blessed is he that believeth. You see plainly that to believe in Jesus is the whole of Christianity; therefore to be without this faith, this practical faith, is but to have at best a name to live. Let us examine our hearts. Let us prove ourselves, whether we be in the faith. It will not fail to do us good one where or other; it will shew us our hypocrisy, if we be insin-



cere ; and, if we be found faithful upon the trial, what comfort will it not afford us? May the great God, who made us for his glory, give us grace to believe in his Son Jesus Christ, to the praise of his name, and to our eternal salvation, through him the same Jesus Christ our Lord!

## S E R M O N XIV.

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ACTS xvi. 30, 31.

*What must I do to be saved? And they said, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.*

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IN speaking to the second branch of the Creed, relative to the Son, and his work of redemption, I told you that it contained two parts. *First*, A profession of faith; I believe in Jesus. *Secondly*, A declaration of the grounds upon which such belief doth stand. The former having been fully spoken to, we enter now on the latter. And the first thing, whereon we profess our belief of the sufficiency of Jesus to save us, is, that we know and are sure that he is *Christ*, duly set apart, and duly qualified, for the office and work of a Saviour.

As to the meaning of the term *Christ*, it is no other than *Anointed*, which also the word *Messiah* signifies. But we must consider the force of the expression, as it belongs to Jesus. Now it is plain that he is called *Christ* in the New Testament, in an eminent and extraordinary way; so that, though others before him were indeed anointed, yet to none of them beside him is the title *Christ* applied, as it were for a name where-

by to be ordinarily distinguished. And because of this peculiar eminency he is often called *The Christ*; which manifestly implies that he is such in a manner peculiar to himself; as also it denotes an expectation, grounded upon promises, that such a Christ in that eminent way, of which all other anointed persons were but shadows and figures, should appear in the world.

Among the Jews, three sorts of persons, *Prophets*, *Priests*, and *Kings*, were solemnly set apart to their respective offices by the ceremony of anointing with oil. In conformity with which, the Saviour, in whom the whole design of the Jewish constitution centred, in whom it was to have its intended issue, and who was to execute all these three offices, in the whole saving discharge of them, unto the church, must of necessity also be anointed thereunto. As a Prophet, he was to reveal the whole will of God; as a Priest, he was to make satisfaction and intercession for sin; as a King, he was to gather, govern, and protect his people. Upon his full discharge of which offices depends the whole success of his mediatorial undertaking, both as the glory of God and our salvation are concerned in it.

Consider the peculiarity of this undertaking, and you will see the necessity of his being authoritatively appointed unto it, as also furnished for it. The matter stands thus: man, by Adam's sin, was fallen from God. Hereby, on the one side, divine Majesty had suffered an insult, which could not be passed over, consistently with the glory due thereto, without a re-

paration made to it, and which, whether it should be made at all in behalf of the offender, and of what kind it should be, lay entirely in the will of God, the injured party; and, on the other part, through the same apostacy, there was such a departure as amounted to downright enmity against God; man was as unwilling to come to any terms of accommodation with his Maker, as he was unable to find out any; or, should he have found them, to perform the condition of them in any manner that would at once comport with God's glory and his own salvation. Perfectly to heal this breach was to be the business of a Mediator; and you find his business was to make God satisfaction for the wrong done him; and to prevail with man to accept of an offer of peace made by God, in consideration of that satisfaction, and to return to his place and duty. In which views it is manifest that he must be duly authorized to make a satisfaction for the offender which God would accept (for it must needs be made according to God's pleasure, and in such a way as he could be content with); and then not only must he be authorized to make this satisfaction, but also in God's name to declare and publish God's having accepted it, and his inviting and commanding all men to come unto it; nor is this all, he must have authority also to confer the whole benefits of this satisfaction on such as should seek to have the blessing of it. But, not only must he be thus endued with proper authority on God's part, he must have also a power to work on the hearts of men, to bring them to see the misery of their apostate state, to relieve them;

from and encourage them against their fears that must necessarily rise upon such a discovery, by the application of his satisfaction; and, finally, to change their hearts unto a love of God, who is naturally the object of their hatred, into a complacency in him, and cheerfulness in serving him. All this is, in fewer words, he must be a Priest, to make satisfaction for sinners to the glory of God, and an Intercessor, through whom they may have free access unto him, without disgrace done to his most holy Majesty by their unworthiness, and without discouragement, on their part, because of it: he must be a Prophet, to declare, in the name of God, the salvation he hath procured; to convince men, in their hearts, of their absolute want of it, and of its sufficiency to relieve them: he must be a King, to confer authoritatively this salvation upon all that humbly sue for it, to defend them from their enemies, and to maintain a spiritual dominion in their hearts. Upon these considerations it appears that he must be duly authorized for his mediatorial work, and also duly qualified. That he was both the one and the other, both solemnly consecrated unto it, and fully fitted for it, being anointed King, Priest, and Prophet, for this very purpose, you declare when you say, *I believe in Jesus the Christ*. Wherein you profess your belief of these two things, relative to and implied in his anointing, as together constituting him an authorized, qualified, and ample Mediator for the exercise of his kingly, prophetic, and sacerdotal work, and the fulfilment of God's design, respecting his own glory, in that transaction.

*First.*—That he was solemnly consecrated, inaugurated, and set apart to this work, according to the purpose of God, before the worlds were, and according to the tenour of the covenant of redemption, by the express designation and open declaration of the Father, whereby he was publicly sealed and invested Prophet, Priest, and King, and God's commissioning him thereto, with full power and authority, was avowed and declared. That he was thus consecrated hereunto you have been taught to believe from God's testimony to this very thing, as by the many wonderful works that he wrought by him, and in confirmation of his mission, so especially by that open declaration at the time of his baptism, *when the Spirit like a dove descended and lighted upon him; and, lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.* A testimony which our Lord himself afterwards refers to, as fully declarative of his commission, and as being nothing less than God's seal put unto it, for the conviction of the world that he came fully empowered: *Labour for that meat which endureth unto eternal life, which the Son of man shall give unto you; for him hath God the Father sealed.*

*Secondly.*—Besides his consecration, you believe also his qualification, as the other thing implied in his anointing. And this is his receiving in his human nature the fulness of the *Holy Ghost, which, you are expressly assured, was given to him without measure, John iii. 34.* Hereby he was furnished with every gift and every grace that could possibly be needful to the discharge of all and every part of his work, as to

what related to his human nature therein, to offer himself freely and without spot unto God, to declare the whole will of God, and to attend upon the ministrations thereof with the demonstrative illumination of the Spirit, to direct, assist, sanctify, and build up his people unto a meetness for the heavenly inheritance. In short, as he was constituted and consecrated to the office of a Saviour by the designation and declaration of the Father, so was he by him furnished and qualified by the unlimited bestowment of every gift and grace of the Spirit necessary thereto. And in both these together consists his anointing. From the nature of his office, as one who was to mediate between God and his apostate creatures, neither of them could be wanting; his consecration and his qualification must go hand in hand. Had he not acted in God's name, and been invested with his authority, his qualifications and actions would have been without divine warrant; and had he been only authorized, and not furnished, he had been unequal to the work he was sent to perform. Happy for us that his commission and qualification are so ample; and that we have the testimony of Scripture (I might say also of experience), that our Saviour Jesus is fully authorized and fitted to teach us as our Prophet; to atone and intercede for us, as our Priest; and to rule and defend us, as our King.

But now, brethren, we may know all this, and yet come utterly short of the full meaning and purpose of this word *Christ*, here in the Creed. The person here speaking is supposed to have entered into the

design of this unction or anointing, and in some measure to have his heart and conduct in conformity with it. Does he say, I believe Jesus was solemnly authorized and amply fitted to teach me the will of God, that I should pay no manner of regard to it, remain in ignorance of it through my own carelessness, or proudly dispute the truth of what he says? Does the believer declare, I know Jesus was constituted and qualified to make atonement for sin, that I should make no manner of use of that atonement, either standing upon my own righteousness, or never seriously considering my sinfulness and misery, that I may seek the benefit of his? Is Jesus, does he say, ordained a King, and furnished with every kingly requisite, that I should remain serving my lusts, opposing his kingdom, and growing daily more ripe for destruction in the increasing hardness and impenitency of my heart? These, you see, are flat contradictions to a true belief of the unction of Jesus unto his offices. The very reverse is the true spirit of faith. And when the real believer says, "I believe in Jesus the Anointed," he takes comfort from the persuasion which the assured consecration and qualification of Jesus give him of his power to save; and honestly desires that he may partake of his saving help in all those offices unto which he is thus anointed.

You see then the full purport and meaning of the word *Christ*, as it stands connected with Jesus, must be this; "I believe in Jesus as my only Saviour," (for it has been observed that the word Jesus must be carried forward to every point following in this second



branch of the Creed,) “ and I believe in him as my  
“ Saviour, to deliver me from darkness, guilt, and  
“ sin, among other reasons afterwards to be men-  
“ tioned, first of all for this, because I know him to  
“ be Christ, designed and set apart by God, and  
“ fully furnished for his office. And seeing God hath  
“ appointed and fitted him to be a Prophet, Priest,  
“ and King to me, I do desire always to give honour  
“ unto God’s appointment herein; and, at the same  
“ time, to ascribe all the glory I can to my Saviour,  
“ thus constituted and sealed by the Father, as well  
“ as furnished by the fulness of the Holy Ghost, by  
“ yielding myself with all reverence, humility, and  
“ submission, unto his teaching, righteousness, and  
“ grace; holding it my greatest present blessing to  
“ partake of his unction in all these respects, and  
“ desiring and designing to wait perseveringly upon  
“ him in all his appointed ways, that I may continu-  
“ ally *receive grace for grace out of his fulness*; till,  
“ in the faithful discharge of all his offices towards  
“ me, he bring me to his everlasting kingdom. And  
“ this is my meaning, when I make my profession  
“ and say, *I believe in Jesus Christ.*”

Well, now, and what say our hearts to this? Is this the real sentiment we have within us? Do we honestly desire to be thus minded towards Jesus, considered as the Anointed of God? I will endeavour to shew a little how you may know if this is not your case; and then I will help you to see how far it is your case; and conclude with certain encouraging thoughts arising from the unction of Jesus.

I. I will endeavour a little to show you how you may know if this is not your case. And this most certainly it is not.

1.—If you have never deeply found the want of a Saviour; for then it is impossible you should have received him whom God has sent to you with full authority and ample qualification. Now of such there are, doubtless, very many in the world, and, without question, in this congregation. Christ found many of that stamp in his days, people who were whole, and did not need him who was come to seek and save that which was lost. If you have been satisfying yourself with comparisons, if you have been staying yourself upon an outward decency, if you have never entered into the depths of your own heart, and are a stranger, whether to the fact of your fallen nature, or to the evil of it, and the danger of that estate; if you have not been brought to inquire what you should do to be saved, from an infelt experience of your exceeding vileness, and with a real concern, in respect of which every earthly thing appeared to you worthy of no consideration; if you have gone on with the multitude, and thought nothing of these serious matters, leaving them to visionaries and enthusiasts, as you were ready to account such as were seriously concerned for their eternal interests; in any of these cases, it is most manifest you have not come to Jesus the Anointed; and the longer you have lived, the more have you added to the prejudices of your heart against Christ's word, to the obstinacy of your heart against his law, and to the size of your guilt against the day

of recompense unto such as obey not the Gospel. You who have not found the want of a Saviour can never have received him as the Christ of God. Nor,

2.—'Though you have seemingly found the want of him in the power of an enlightened, and something awakened conscience, but have not received him, as God has sent and furnished him to be a Prophet, Priest, and King to you, still you cannot say truly, "I believe in Jesus the Christ." Nothing in the world can be plainer than this. For only see. Who is your teacher? What! Christ? Does his word stand really for every thing with you, and outweigh every thing, the custom of the world, the wisdom of the world, the learning of the world; so that, if that says it, you make no great account of what never so many can say against it, running directly counter to all that run contrary to your Bible, and bringing every thing to the law and the testimony, to prove it, whether it be right or wrong? Is Christ your Priest? Are you crying unto him, "Lord, save me; Lord, plead for me; for I am vile, I am unworthy; I cannot stand before this holy Lord God; I am nothing but sin and misery, and yet I would not be cast out of his presence, that were very hell, and infinitely worse than any thing I could suffer here?" What! is this your daily, your importunate, cry? And is Christ your King? What! do you own no king but Jesus? Are all your lusts put in subjection under his feet, and do you loyally endeavour they may be kept so, not your most convenient, most pleasing, sin excepted? Is it your constant cry, that

he may keep you from all iniquity, may sanctify you wholly, and maintain an undisturbed dominion in you, and over you? Can you say this? If you can, you are not the person I am speaking to. But if you cannot, and you know nothing of all I have been declaring, it is plain the unction of Jesus has not reached unto you, and that you do not believe in him as your Christ. But,

II.—I would show you how far you have received him as God's Anointed. It is supposed you have found the want of him in his offices, and that you are so far persuaded of his sufficiency as to have submitted yourself to him, to be taught, saved, and ruled by him; that your case therefore is not like that of those I have just been speaking to. You are in the number of true believers, and would know how far you are gone in receiving Jesus as the Christ of God. You may know it two ways.

1.—By the honour and reverence you pay him, considered as bearing God's authority towards you, that is, as being consecrated by God to be a Prophet, Priest, and King unto you. How far do you reverence God's authority in the offices of Jesus? I will tell you how far. It is just as far as you hear him speaking to you with an humble, meek, attentive, and teachable spirit; just as far as you dare not question his merits, and dare not trust on your own; just as far as you find his commands to be decisive, and submitted to without gainsaying, at all events. For, as the unbeliever shews his irreverence of God's authority in the person of the Anointed,

by paying him no regard in the offices, so, you may be sure, the more you do the contrary, the more your soul is brought into a submissive and lowly estate before him, so much the more you honour him, as the sealed of the Father. Then,

2.—You may also know your measure herein by the use you make of Jesus, considered as qualified to be a Prophet, Priest, and King to you. The more diligent you are in hearkening to the words of his mouth, keeping them in your heart, pondering upon them, and waiting, in all prayer, for his Spirit to enlighten you in the knowledge of them; the more frequent, ready, and confident you are in applying to his obedience and intercession under the sight of all your sins; the more resolute and constant you are in suing for his grace to keep you in temptations, to rid you from corruptions, to subdue in you the whole body of sin, to maintain and increase in you the blessed graces of Faith, Hope, and Charity; so much the more you evidently receive him, as qualified by God to be a Prophet, Priest, and King towards you. There is no disputing so plain a thing on one side or other. It is our practice must shew our progress. In the measure we thus use Christ we receive him in his offices. And let us beware that neither Satan be allowed to make us deny a plain matter of fact on one side, nor self-flattery prevail with us to believe a lie on the other.

And now, my friends, we see how the matter stands with us, in respect of Christ's unction. As our case is, let us take encouragement to come unto Jesus,

they who are far off, and they who are nigh, from this comfortable and delightful thought, that he is Christ, the Anointed of God, the commissioned and qualified Prophet, and Priest, and King. Sirs, in these offices there is full supply of all our wants; there is not one case of any poor sinner that is not here provided for. I defy, in the name of Jesus, Guilt to make any charge, Unbelief to raise any objections, the Habit of Sin to set up any claim, the Law to denounce any sentence, Death, Judgment, and Hell together, to present any terrors which Jesus is not able to remove. O, my brethren! it was even because we were thus guilty, sinful, miserable, ignorant, helpless, that Jesus was anointed to be a Saviour. What stands in our way to glory? It is guilt, it is sin, it is blindness, it is Satan. Why, here is the Christ, the constituted, the qualified Prophet, Priest, and King; and therefore anointed, because we needed such an one. What! mean we then to loiter? Who can be against us? God is for us; it is manifest our Christ is a complete Saviour. Let not then your hands hang down in any case. Come to the Saviour, the Anointed of the Lord. Why will ye stand off from him, who is come to save you? What! because ye have long resisted and refused to obey him? What! because ye are very guilty? What! because Satan has long had dominion over you? Still I say, Come, for Jesus is Christ. And O what a comfort to every believing soul, that God has thus commissioned and qualified Jesus! such a Mediator between God and man; so appointed of the Father; so furnished by the

Spirit; such a Teacher, King, and Priest! Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we know and are sure that thou art Christ. O how joyfully should we say these words of Peter! How confident should our faith be, when we say, one before another, *I believe in Jesus the Christ!*

## S E R M O N XV.

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ACTS xvi. 30, 31.

*What must I do to be saved? And they said, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.*

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IN explaining the second branch of the Creed, we have already considered what it is to believe in Jesus; and have begun to illustrate the grounds upon which our firm confidence in him, as our all-sufficient Saviour, is fixed, and stands unshaken; to wit, in the first place, because he is Christ, anointed to this work by the Father. The second thing upon which we build our faith in Jesus, as our sufficient Saviour, comes now to be spoken to, in opening the words that follow, *His only Son*.

In order to the explication of this point, it is altogether needful to observe, that the divinity of our Lord is not a matter of speculation, or a mere doctrinal position, but that on which the sufficiency of Jesus as a Saviour does most eminently depend. If a Saviour be wanted, it is necessary that the person who undertakes the work should be fit for it; nor can any, who are truly sensible of the want of salvation in this fallen state of ours, possibly betrust them-



selves to one that offers it to them, until they be surely convinced, on good grounds, that he is able to give it them. If the Saviour be insufficient, the attempt fails; and unless the sinner be persuaded of the Saviour's sufficiency, he cannot depend upon him. You see therefore how far the point before us is from being a speculation; that the inquiry into the truth of it should be entered into with the concern which its importance to our souls gives it; and that they who, incompetently sensible of the want of a Saviour, do address themselves to search thereinto, must necessarily either receive it as a mere notion, or reject it as absurd and impossible. The person who is really sensible of his fallen sinful estate, and duly concerned about being set at liberty from the alarming apprehensions which it has begotten in him respecting a future world, is the only one that can profitably inquire into this mysterious truth, "that Jesus is the Son of God;" and it is his belief of that which can alone support him in his present circumstances with confidence, hope, and peace. If Jesus be *the only-begotten of the Father*, his mediatorial sufficiencies cannot be questioned, and he must needs be able to save to the uttermost. It remains only that the self-condemned sinner be satisfied he is so; and when he has assuredly learnt this, not from man, but from that word which he is incontestably convinced is God's, he grows easy, and without the least hesitation of heart cries out, "*Truly in the Lord have I righteousness. Now I know, and am sure, that*

“ *all who believe in thee shall not perish, but have everlasting life.*”

To come therefore to the plain force of this expression, as it stands here in the Creed, which amounts to this, “ I believe in Jesus because he is the only “ Son of the Father.” And when I say this, I intend these three things:—

*First.*—That I verily believe him to be the only Son of the Father.

*Secondly.*—That since I know him to be so, I cannot doubt of his power to save.

*Thirdly.*—And that therefore I do both confidently rely upon him, and also humbly yield myself up unto him to be saved by him in all respects.

*First.*—I verily believe him to be the only Son of the Father. And for this I have the plainest evidences, and such as give me the fullest satisfaction, however the co-existence of the three Persons in the one undivided divine Essence is above my comprehension, and however mysterious is the generation of this only-begotten Son from all eternity of the Father. For I find him continually called in Scripture *the Son, the only-begotten Son, the Son of God, the only-begotten of the Father*; and I am taught to understand these expressions in the most proper and simple sense, by very many other expressions which distinguish him from all others that are called sons, and plainly style him God; declaring, that *he was in the beginning with God, and was God; that he was in the form of God; that he is the true God*; and setting

him out as the object of faith and worship, together with the Father and the Holy Ghost. In conformity with which accounts of his divine nature, I find both the works and perfections of divinity ascribed to this only-begotten Son, who is expressly said to be the *Creator* of all things; inasmuch as *the world was made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made*; to be the *Preserver* of all things, forasmuch as *it is he who is upholding all things by the word of his power*; to be the *living God*, in him was *life*; to be *omnipotent*, seeing, *whatsoever things the Father doth, the same doth the Son likewise*; to be *omnipresent*, for, *where two or three are met together in my name, there, says he, am I in the midst of them*; to be, finally, *a searcher of hearts*; for *he knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man, for he knew what was in man*: and more expressly does he assert of himself, *I am he who searcheth the reins and the heart, and I will give unto every one according to their works*, Rev. xi. 23. Finding therefore these works and properties ascribed unto him, which I know, nevertheless, to be peculiar to God, I am further determined in what sense I am to take those expressions, which speak of him as the only-begotten of the Father, and as God; not the same *Person* with the Father, for then there would be neither Father nor Son; and yet I see evidently of the same *essence* and *perfections* with him; so that, unless I should say there are two Gods, I cannot deny him and the Father to be one. Nor do I find any thing to lessen my belief of his being the proper

and eternal Son of God, when I consider him, in his office-capacity of Redeemer, assuming our nature, and thereby becoming Jesus. On the contrary, I see him putting forth such acts of divinity, even in his estate of humiliation, as sufficiently testify to his being the Son of God. Struck with the incontestable evidence, one could not help crying out, "*Rabbi, thou art the Son of God!*" and another, "*My Lord and my God!*" and two others, in the name of all, "*We know and are sure that thou art Christ the Son of the living God.*"—" *And we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.*" I see him manifested to be the Son of God, by all the riches of wisdom and knowledge that shone forth in him; by his mighty words and works; by the submission which all creatures, when he pleased, were enforced to pay him; by a thousand circumstances in his life; yet more by the manner of his death; more still by his raising himself from the dead; most of all by his actual and evident dominion at the right hand of God; from whence I behold him exerting such acts of power upon the hearts of men, and especially my own; watching over his church with such infinite love, directing every the minutest circumstance, attending all the members of it with such absolute wisdom, and displaying such acts of divine power; that, upon the whole, I am still more convincingly satisfied, by his mediatorial transactions, of his being in very deed the Son of God.—And therefore,

*Secondly.*—Knowing him to be the only Son of

God, I cannot doubt of his power to save. I see, evidently, that salvation must be the work of God, who alone can open the blind eyes of apostate minds, alone can justify the ungodly, and by whose alone power it is that souls spiritually dead can be raised to spiritual life, and restored to the divine image and likeness again, that body of sin, which now so dreadfully works in them, being utterly destroyed. To shine into the heart with supernatural and divine light, to justify the ungodly, to sanctify the unholy, must be God's works: for they are appropriated to God alone. And here I see God himself effecting them by the only Son, who has graciously condescended to this task, and, having taken our nature into his own, he himself, in that union, is become a Prophet, Priest, and King, for our full salvation. Can I dispute, then, his sufficiency in this mediatorial character? Not while I know him to be the only-begotten of the Father. That one word silences all objection. To say that he is God come to save us, and yet to say that he is not able to save us, is a blasphemy I tremble at. Can I say that he made all things, and at the same time question if he be able to restore all things? Does he uphold the world by his power, and yet has he not might enough to save a worm? Did he come down from heaven to work salvation, and shall his undertaking fail? What should, what could, frustrate it? Was he unable to answer the demands of infinite justice? What! when the blood which purchased the church was the blood of God? Was he ignorant of the counsels of the Father's will, when

*from all eternity he was by him, as one brought up with him; when he was in the bosom of the Father, when in him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge? Should the opposition of Sin, Satan, Men, Death, Hell, hinder? O how sufficient above all such difficulties is this God our Saviour? Here lies my chief ground of faith, I know Jesus to be the only Son of God, and, with the Father and the Spirit, one God. Knowing this, I avow the merit of all he did and suffered; I avouch every gracious word of his mouth to be *yea* and *amen*; his promises to be unchangeable; his charge to be divine; I proclaim him mighty to save, though a most rebellious nature, the power of the grave, the artifice of Satan, and the whole force of earthly allurements, interest, ease, custom, reproach, stand in the way. All-sufficiency is in Jesus, because he is the only Son of the Father. And hereupon,*

*Thirdly.*—I do solemnly declare, that, knowing him to be an all-sufficient Saviour, because the only-begotten Son of God, I do rely upon him, in all respects, with the fullest confidence; and humbly yield myself up to him to be saved by him in all his offices. I know his power, and do not distrust him in any wise; but, leaning assuredly on what he has said, I do not fear condemnation, though I am a sinner; nor question his perfecting the work of holiness which he has begun in me, though I am so full of corruption; I look forward to the day of his appearing with boldness, and wait for it with longing expectation; I lay my hand on everlasting life as my portion, and tread

death and hell under my feet, as risen with my incarnate God; I defy every enemy present and to come, and say unto the Lord, *Thou art my God*. I know whom I have believed, and being fully persuaded that he is very God, I have committed and do commit my whole self to his keeping, humbly and reverently waiting for his saving help from day to day, that he may show me more and more of his divine glory and unsearchable love, to the end that I may rejoice more abundantly in the efficacy of his obedience and death, and may be changed into the same image from glory to glory by his Almighty Spirit. And this my confidence in him, and submission to him, I mean to declare, when I say I believe in Jesus *his only Son*.

Let us come now to some necessary considerations arising from this point. As,

*First.*—We should observe the peculiar influence which our believing Jesus to be, in his heavenly nature, the Son of God, has unto our faith in him as a sufficient Saviour. I say the peculiar influence: for though indeed all the grounds upon which this faith stands, and which are particularly pointed out in this branch of the Creed, be absolutely necessary unto that faith, so that not one of them can be disbelieved consistently therewith; yet in the present point there is this peculiar and eminent, that it is the life of all the rest, giving merit and efficacy to all the Mediator's transactions, and without which he could not be that Saviour he is. The divinity of Jesus standing confirmed, there is a power in his offices, life, death, resurrection, exaltation, and approaching

coming, which faith can take hold of with confidence. But take this away, and what remains? What great difference between him and that other mediator, Moses, who prefigured him? What difference in their teaching? Jesus could only reveal more of God's will than his forerunner; but to teach the heart Moses and he would be equally insufficient. What differences in their sacrifices? There was no merit in those of Moses to take away sin, neither, in this case, would there be in that of Jesus to satisfy the demands of infinite injured justice. And as to dominion, what power in Jesus more than Moses, to know, convert, and govern the hearts of men; to sanctify their corrupted nature, or to defeat and overrule the secret or open attempts of the devil, if he be not God? Take away the divinity of Jesus, and you cut off his right hand that he cannot help you, and therewith all your confidence in him as able to help you. Indeed, if you are not sensible of your fallen state, a saviour who is not God may serve your turn; if it be not absurd to call him a Saviour, when you find no saving work for him to do; and when from him, as you find not that you want any thing else, so you expect nothing more than that he should come commissioned from God to fix a perfect system of morals, and to declare beforehand what the issue will be of your conforming to or neglecting them. And truly this is the way of such as deny the divinity of Christ. They deny or diminish to a mere nothing the corruption of our nature. Hence they know not what the real state of man now is, nor consequently the need



of divine illumination, remission of sins, and a change of heart; so being unacquainted with what indeed made a Saviour necessary, they can have no dependence upon him for the effectual discharge of his offices to them; and of course, when they set themselves to determine about the divinity of Christ, can only judge of it as a matter of mere speculation and orthodoxy. They begin at the wrong end; and, while they know not themselves, are void of that spirit of meekness which prepares the mind for divine discoveries: and no wonder if they quarrel with that doctrine of the Trinity as unintelligible and incomprehensible, which to those who truly know the want of salvation is incontestably evident in the Scriptures, and the whole ground of their confidence, hope, and triumph.

*Secondly.*—We should observe the exceeding sinfulness and danger of a state of unbelief. By a state of unbelief is meant that condition of soul wherein people, through the hardness of their hearts, do either carelessly neglect or wilfully refuse the Gospel. Brethren, are there no souls here in this condition? If ye all know yourselves to be such sinners, that ye dare not look up to God but through Jesus Christ, and are yet putting forth the strength given to you that he may be a Saviour unto you, concerned about this more than all things besides, then there are none such in this assembly. But, alas! is it so? Would to God it were so! O what a happy day would it then be for all of us! I mistake myself greatly, if all the things in the world together would give me such happiness. Ah, sirs! ye are committed to my care;

your souls are betruſted unto me; and can I be eaſy while I ſee any of you out of the road of heaven? Why will ye be angry with me? Do I wrong you by wiſhing you happy; happy beyond all that tongue can ſpeak or heart can think, eternally, gloriouſly, happy; ſeated on the hills of paradise, and every ſoul of you with a crown of glory on his head, and I among and amidſt you, my dear people? What ſhall I do? ſhall I leave you to yourſelves? What! ſhall I betray your ſouls, and leave you quietly in the hands of the devil? How would you then curſe me at laſt, how juſtly would you then curſe me, and call for vengeance on my unfaithful head? “ This was our miniſter. He did not warn us; he did not tell us of our danger; he did not care what became of our ſouls; he forbore to tell us plainly what the end would be, through fear of our diſpleaſure. Juſtice, Jesus, thou righteous Judge! we demand juſtice upon him for our periſhed ſouls through his cowardice and neglect.” Ah, ſirs! I would willingly ſee you all at the right hand of Jesus. I would not, no, I would not have one word delivered by me to any ſoul of you riſe up in judgment againſt you. What ſhall I ſay? Are ye all believers? Gracious God, that thy word ſhould have been preached ſo many years together in this place to ſo little purpoſe! What? All believers? The marks of an unbelieving ſtate to be found on none? Whence then ſo much drunkenneſs and idle company-keeping? whence ſo much covetouſneſs and carking care after the world? whence ſo much pleaſure and vanity? I ſay ſo much

pleasure and vanity; for, since I knew you, you are grown exceedingly addicted to pleasure and vanity. It is but a very few years ago that this place was remarkable for gravity in dress; but is it so at present? You know it is not. There are many of you that spoil one another; and I see many of the lower sort who are as fond as their betters of making a figure this way. Now faith is certainly a serious thing. I wish you would all try your hearts. While we are following the vain pomp and glory of the world, the covetous desires of the same, or the carnal desires of the flesh, can we have faith? No, it cannot be. And yet I must tell you, that to be in a state of unbelief is terrible. Judge of it only from this word of the apostle, "If the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" And again, "For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven," that is, from the only Son of God. God said, "I will send my Son unto them, it may be they will reverence my Son." But when they would not, then it follows, "What shall God do to them?" He shall miserably destroy them." But,

*Thirdly.*—We should all of us honour the Son more than we do. His honour and our profit are inseparable. Had we higher thoughts of his glory, as the only-begotten of the Father in a mediatorial capacity, we should not be so apt to mistrust him as we do,

through remaining unbelief, because of our sinfulness, the power of our enemies, the depth of our corruptions, the darkness of our own minds, and the suggestions of the devil. To honour the Son is to exalt him in our hearts as an all-sufficient Saviour. This is his proper glory, as Mediator. And the way to it is, to keep closer to him, to think oftener of him, and to behold and look more abundantly upon his glory as the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. Nor shall our labour herein be without reward. Our faith will grow more lively; our hope of beholding his glory in heaven more ardent; our souls will be more peaceful; our fears of death die away; our love of this world be mortified. “Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?” *There* is the conquering faith. Strive hard for it. Let Jesus dwell in our hearts, and our hearts will be changed from day to day; see therefore that ye pay increasing honour to Jesus *the Son of God*.

## S E R M O N XVI.

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ACTS xvi. 30, 31.

*What must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.*

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I AM now to speak of Jesus *as our Lord*, which will afford us another important ground of our faith in him. And the addition of his being our Lord will be found, in connexion with what he has been already seen to be, a substantial foundation of all confidence in Jesus. As Christ, he is amply furnished for the work of salvation; as *the only Son*, his sufficiency in that work is incontestable; and being our Lord he acts therein with sovereign authority.

In treating this point we must needs proceed as with the foregoing, considering it in a practical manner, inasmuch as Jesus's being our Lord cannot be a thing of speculation, but that on which our confidence in him, as acting with all authority, is indisputably determined. That he is so, that he transacts all his mediatorial work with absolute power and plenary authority, we all profess to believe, as a sure ground of our confidence in his salvation, when we say, *I be-*

*lieve in Jesus our Lord.* Wherein we declare thus much,

*First.*—I believe Jesus to be Lord of all things by his nature, as the only Son of God.

*Secondly.*—Therefore I believe him qualified to be, what he is, Lord of all things by constitution, as the Son of man.

*Thirdly.*—As the Son of man I know that he hath exercised, and believe that he both doth and will exercise, an absolute dominion over all things. Wherefore,

*Fourthly.*—I humbly subject myself to his saving power in all respects. I do confidently trust upon Jesus as authoritatively executing all his offices. I quietly wait upon him for the performance of all salvation to me. And as the subject of his dominion, I desire to own and honour him as my Lord and the Lord of all things, by a dutiful use of myself and my gifts, by a public profession of his name in the world, and by keeping my body and spirit for him to death and judgment.

*First.*—I believe Jesus to be Lord of all things by his nature, as the only Son of God. For as I know him to be the proper Son of the Father, and see all the works and perfections which are proper to God ascribed to him, so I find him bearing those titles, which, as they are incommunicable, so also expressive of absolute independency, and consequently of the dependence of all things upon God. Thus in the Old Testament he is frequently called *Jehovah* (which

signifies the root and fountain of all existence, or very being itself), and that in such passages where the Father and the Son being equally styled by this very name Jehovah, there is no room left me to doubt that the Son is Jehovah as well as and with the Father. Thus I read in Zech. x. 12. *I will strengthen them in the Lord* (in the original it is Jehovah), *and they shall walk up and down in his name, saith the Lord* (Jehovah). And in Hos. i. 7. *I* (Jehovah) *will have mercy upon the house of Judah, and will save them by the Lord* (Jehovah) *their God, and will not save them by bow nor by sword.* And in the New Testament he is known to me by the same title universally, *the Lord* being a name there continually given him; while also it is not disputed, that the *Lord* and *Jehovah* are but the same word in two different languages, which expresses that independency of God, by which he must needs have all creatures in dependence upon him, holding dominion over all things. Wherefore,

*Secondly.*—Knowing him to be Lord of all things by nature, as the Son of God, the Creator and Upholder of all, I do believe him qualified to be what he is, the Lord of all things by constitution, as the Son of man. Redemption I know to be a work beyond the power of any son of man, who is not also the Son of God: but when I see *upon whose shoulders the government is laid*, even upon that Son of man who is assumed into union with the *mighty God, the wonderful Counsellor*, I see it placed where it belongs, and in hands that are able to support it with honour,

and to exercise it with power. And accordingly, as I know him thus qualified for dominion, so I believe him to be constituted Lord of all things, as Mediator, by the express appointment of the Father; whereof I am assured in numberless Scriptures, where I am told, *God hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things*, according to what was declared before concerning him. *The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.* Of this grant I hear him speaking himself; *All things are delivered unto me of my Father.* And again, *The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hands*; and the apostles triumphing in the truth of this dominion, *God hath made this same Jesus whom ye have crucified both Lord and Christ; and God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name, which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.* Here is plainly declared to me the extensiveness of his dominion, as it is also yet more fully in other places: *He hath set him at his own right hand in heavenly places, far above all principality and power, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come. Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands. Thou hast put all things in subjection under him; for in that he put all*



*in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him.* Neither do I find this dominion of Jesus less ample as to continuance than complete in largeness; “Of his kingdom there shall be no end, his throne is for ever and ever, his dominion an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away; and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.”

And,

*Thirdly.*—As I find him to have been thus constituted Lord of all things as the Son of man, so I find further that he actually exercised the dominion that was committed to him, while he was upon earth, in an authoritative manner, though not with that fulness of power and dominion wherewith, in reward of his death, he was invested after his resurrection, when God put all things under his feet. His taking possession of the kingdom in the whole glory and exercise of it was reserved to the solemn day of his session at the right hand of God: but yet he exercised his dominion in a royal manner, and with supreme authority, while he was upon earth. Thus I hear him saying to the winds and sea, ‘Peace, be still; and immediately there was a great calm.’ I hear him commanding the lame to walk, and suddenly they take up their bed. I find him giving sight to the blind at a word; and I hear him speaking to the dead, and they arise. Nay, I behold him exerting his dominion in such acts as are more proper to the nature of his kingdom, as a *spiritual* government; he cast out devils at a word, and empowered his disciples to do the same. ‘Master, even the devils are

‘ subject to us through thy name.’ He said to one and another, ‘ Thy sins are forgiven thee;’ that it might be known he ‘ had power on earth to forgive ‘ sins.’ He exerted acts of divine power upon the hearts of men, *Follow me*; turned the hearts of some; and such a majesty was felt in his preaching, that such as would not believe could not help confessing, ‘ never man spake like this man.’ But his whole dominion was reserved till his inauguration at the right hand of the throne of God. Then he wrought to make his power to be known. I see the exalted Jesus to be Lord of all things. Lord of gifts; what an effusion of them was there at Pentecost! And of graces; what zeal, what boldness, did the cowardly fishermen obtain in a moment! Then he proved himself the Lord of men’s hearts. How many were made obedient to the faith, in one day, of those very persons upon whom the word of Jesus in person had proved inefficacious! I see the wisdom of man, and the prince of darkness, bowing every where before the throne of Jesus. I see attending angels executing his commissions, when he will save the life of an apostle, and the soul of a jailer. I see Death disarmed of all his terrors, the world of all its power, while suffering saints look up to heaven and say, *Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!* What is become of the rage of men, the awe of councils, the dread of judgment-seats? The power of Jesus has disarmed them all. His servants are made strong by his arm, *they* only triumph while their judges are confounded. How did the number of disciples increase, Gentiles as well as Jews became

obedient to the faith, and opposition only served to illustrate the reign of Immanuel! And to this day is his arm shortened? Every where there are they who own the power of Jesus, who confess him mighty to save upon their own experience. "What power hath he not exerted upon my heart?" doth our believer say: "I was blind, and he opened my eyes. I was dead in sin, and he quickened me. I was enslaved by Satan, and he set me free. He carried me in his arms, like a lamb of the flock, nor suffered the roaring lion to make me his prey. He taught me to go. He held up my goings. He would not suffer me to be tempted above my strength. He gently raised me up when I fell. He brought me into a place of liberty, and spake comfortably to me. He brought down my deadly enemies, sin and the world, under me. He has given me a glorious hope; and I know that, when this tabernacle shall be dissolved, he hath prepared for me a house eternal in the heavens. He hath taken away the sting of death, and hath caused me to wait till my change comes. But what! am I the only living instance of the almighty power of Jesus? Who then are these that walk in the light, that are turned unto God, that are renouncing all and following Jesus, that have their hope full of immortality, upon whom the devil, the world, and the flesh, have no power to hurt them? Who has begotten these? who keeps them? who sets their faces like flint, that they are not ashamed? Thine is the kingdom, exalted Jesus! I see, I own it; and of thy

“ dominion there is no end. We wait for thy second  
“ coming with power and great glory, to put all thine  
“ enemies and ours under thy feet for ever, destroy-  
“ ing Death, and casting sinners and devils into hell  
“ by the breath of thy mouth; and, to complete the  
“ salvation of thy people, raising them up in glorified  
“ bodies like thine own, reuniting them to their per-  
“ fected souls, giving them the irreversible discharge,  
“ and declaring them, with sovereign authority, the  
“ everlasting partakers of thy joy and kingdom.  
“ Then, glorious Lord! when thou shalt have put  
“ down all rule, and all authority, and power, when  
“ all things shall have been put under thy feet, shall  
“ thou deliver up the kingdom which thou didst ex-  
“ ercise on earth to God, even the Father; and thou  
“ shalt sit down to reign for ever over thy people  
“ whom thou hast purchased and redeemed, and they  
“ shall reign with thee for ever and ever. And now  
“ therefore, being thus fully satisfied respecting the  
“ dominion of Jesus, I declare,

“ *Fourthly.*—That I humbly subject myself to his  
“ saving power in all respects. That I confidently  
“ trust upon him as authoritatively executing all his  
“ offices towards me. That I quietly wait upon him  
“ for the performance of all salvation to me. And  
“ that, as the subject of his kingdom, I desire to own  
“ him as my Lord, and the Lord of all things, by a  
“ dutiful use of myself and my gifts, by a public pro-  
“ fession of his name in the world, and by keeping  
“ my body and spirit for him to death and judgment.  
“ All which things I regard as important branches of

“ my believing in Jesus as the Lord of all things ;  
 “ and, any of which being omitted in my desire and  
 “ endeavour, I cannot be truly come to Jesus as my  
 “ Saviour, nor have confidence in him as such, be-  
 “ cause I am without one of the grounds on which  
 “ his saving power stands, the belief of his being *our*  
 “ *Lord.*”

It may be proper to touch upon each of these points as the time will permit.

*First.*—Seeing I know Jesus to be Lord of all things, I do humbly submit myself to his saving power in all respects. He is constituted of God a Saviour, and as such I humbly desire to receive him, as fully commissioned, absolutely empowered, and amply qualified to save me. The words of his mouth can want no authority, and I would implicitly submit to them ; as the Lord, having the government on his shoulders, he has authority to absolve me from the sentence of death, and bid me live, through the merit of his obedience unto death : to him therefore I would come, and receive my pardon at his hands ; and, having all things in his power, he can sanctify my heart, and keep me from all the power of the enemy ; and with him I would leave my soul for this happy end. I see help no where else in any respect ; my wisdom is foolishness ; I am all over guilt ; and Sin, the World, the Devil, Death, and Judgment, and Hell, are against me. But Jesus is Lord of all things. To him therefore I have betaken myself, and I have determined that he shall be all my salvation.

*Secondly.*—Seeing I know Jesus to be the Lord of

all things, I do confidently trust upon him, as authoritatively executing his offices towards me. If Jesus be the Lord of all things, and all power be given to him in heaven and earth, and herein he acts, though as the Son of man, yet as the Son of God also, whose natural right in all things may not be violated, then he must not be considered as an Ambassador, who, though he has full instructions, yet is under the check and restraint of a superior power, but as having full power in himself, and all whose acts are valid, effectual, and mighty, without reference to any other dominion. Consequently, because of this supreme authority in Jesus, we must credit every word of his mouth as yea and amen, without gainsaying; coming to him, as he has directed, we must believe that he confers upon us forgiveness of sin, without doubting; and committing our souls unto him, we must be persuaded, with perfect satisfaction, that he will keep them. As far as we fail of this we do not treat him as the Lord of all things, and peculiarly as constituted such for the work of redemption. And yet, how ready are we to make little account of our failures this way, as if unbelieving fears were not much to be regarded, and the dishonouring of Christ, as if his authority and power were insufficient, had but small guilt in it? They are horribly inexcusable who will not hearken to the words, nor come to the atonement, nor submit to the grace, of the Lord Jesus. And they are not to be excused, who hear, believe, and submit, in a diffidence of his power.

*Thirdly.*—Seeing I know Jesus to be the Lord of

all things, I do quietly wait upon him for the performance of all salvation to me. *It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord*; and waiting, I desire to remain in the ways my Lord has appointed me, that he may lighten my darkness, that he may cleanse me from the guilt of my daily transgressions, that he may renew my heart from day to day, supporting me in trials, sanctifying to me all troubles, and conducting me safely through this wilderness to the land of my rest where I would be. Waiting is the opposite to impatience; and as the one proves a belief in Jesus as an all-sufficient, most wise, and vigilant Lord and Governor, so the other must of course call in question the reality of his mediatorial dominion, or the might of his power, or the administration of his government, or his faithfulness to the charge he has taken upon him. Quiet waiting is a great mark of a strong faith and an humbled heart. It was in this that Abraham eminently gave God glory. Should he not tarry the Lord's leisure? and because the fulfilment of the promise was long delayed, should he say, The Lord hath forgotten, he will never do it?

*Lastly.*—Seeing I know Jesus to be the Lord of all things, and have taken him to be my Lord, as the subject of his kingdom, I desire to own him as such. And that these three ways, *First*, By a dutiful use of *myself*, and of *my gifts*. As to *myself*, I am not my own; I am bought with a price, and at so dear a rate did my Lord buy me, that it cost him his blood. But not only am I his purchase, I am his conquest also.

He conquered my enemy that had me in chains, and delivered me. What! that I should be my own master? No; but his servant, which is far better. But further still, I have solemnly yielded up myself to him; and shall I draw back? Every way I am his. To his service, use, and glory, I am devoted. And I desire that he may use me as he pleases, not consulting my will, humour, ease, interest, or any convenience of life, but disposing of me as shall be most for his glory and interest. Then as to *my gifts*, they came from him. If I possess knowledge, wisdom, prudence, wealth, honour, he is the Lord of all things, the property lies in him. And what is his wish as to my disposal of them? That I lay them out for the good of his church, and for the enlargement of his interests, as a betruſted ſervant in his family? Surely he could put them into my hands with no other deſign. And to this end, through thy grace, O Lord Jeſus, and not to the indulgence of pride, or the gratifying of inclination, I have determined to uſe them in all watchfulneſs, prayer, and fears. But there is a peculiar talent he has truſted with me, my ſtation and calling in the world. *There* his honour is moſt concerned. My ſoul, be faithful there. Do thy duty there as to the Lord. *Secondly*, I deſire to own him as my Lord, by a public profeſſion of his name in the world. I deſire to walk in his ſteps, however mean it may make me appear. I deſire to obſerve his words, though I alone were ſo engaged in the miſt of the earth, and all were hating, reproaching, and perſecuting me for doing ſo. I deſire never to be aſhamed



of owning myself his in any wise, whatever ridicule it may bring upon me; I desire to own my Lord in the most public manner, that the world may take notice I am a servant of his. I desire to own him in all his public institutions, his day, the ministrations of his word, the memorials of his body and blood: I desire to own him in his people by countenancing them, encouraging them, giving my hand publicly to them because they are his; consorting with them, and doing them all the offices of brotherly love, as belonging to Christ. In all things I desire to confess Jesus to be my Lord before men, as I trust he will confess me to be his servant before the angels of God. And, *Thirdly*, I desire to own Jesus to be my Lord, by keeping my body and spirit for him to death and judgment. They are both his, and I desire to keep both for him, that I may render them to him at his day, that in me he may be glorified as well as others. I desire to keep my *body* fit for his use, undefiled by intemperance, lust, sloth, or any other carnal indulgence; and my *spirit* free from those unchristian tempers of pride, ambition, covetousness, envy, resentment, love of this world, which would make it loathsome in his sight, and prejudicial to his glory. I desire to be preparing for his eternal service in a life of self-denial and spiritual-mindedness. I desire to watch and pray, that my body may be in subjection to my spirit, and my spirit to the Lord. I desire to be found thus doing when thou, Lord, shalt come, and then to render up my soul and body cheerfully to

thee, to serve thee and follow thee to all the ages of a blissful eternity.

Brethren, thus the true Christian believeth in the Lord Jesus. Is this the common character of those who are called by the name of Christians? Let us consider what we have heard; let us examine ourselves whether we be in the faith; let us prove ourselves. Happy are they who call Jesus *Lord* on such a footing as this. But what will it avail to call him Lord a thousand times over, when we are strangers to this temper of faith? We must have made some remarks on ourselves while this Discourse has been delivering. Call them back and improve them. If I have not spoken the words of truth and soberness, condemn me; but if I have, O spare not yourselves, as you hope for mercy in the day of the Lord!

## S E R M O N XVII.

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ACTS xvi. 30, 31.

*What must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.*

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WE have particularly considered the pretensions which Jesus has to our faith in him as our Saviour, from his being Christ, in himself the only Son of the Father, and by constitution our Lord. If he be set apart and fitted for his work by divine unction, if he cannot want power to perform it as being the only-begotten Son, and if his authority be not less than his power as Lord of all in his mediatorial character, then the grounds on which we believe in him cannot be insufficient, and we have no room left us to question whether there be a saving efficacy in all that he has done, is doing, and has yet to do, in the matter of God's glory in our salvation, who believe in his name.

By what steps he has proceeded and does proceed herein, working out salvation, we now declare, when we say, "Who was conceived of the Holy Ghost, "born of the Virgin Mary," &c. In which several points are comprised certain foundations of fact, upon

the performance of which, we, knowing also who he is, remain satisfied in his being a Saviour sufficient in all respects.

The first is, "That he was conceived by the Holy Ghost;" and from his being so (in connexion with the dignity of his person as the Son of God, and his divine constitution to his office and to dominion therein, and with the several other points which come afterwards to be spoken to as necessary to make his work complete), we profess our belief in him as Jesus, *the Saviour*. And it will be exceedingly delightful to the humble soul to follow Jesus through the whole of these transactions, and to see him taking away, one after another, all those obstacles which stood in the way of fallen man's happiness in God in the future and eternal world.

This person, who, we say, was conceived by the Holy Ghost, is no other than he who was just before spoken of, Jesus Christ the only Son our Lord. And when we allege that he was conceived by the Holy Ghost, and born of the Virgin Mary, we mean to express our belief, "That the Word was made flesh." Concerning which incarnation of the Word by the operation of the Holy Ghost on the Virgin Mary, enabling her to conceive, two things must be previously laid down.

*First.*—That there was an absolute necessity that the only-begotten Son, who had undertaken the work of redemption, should be made man to effect it. He was to redeem man, who was fallen from God, and lay under a curse declared by the mouth of God, "In

“ the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely “ die,” and which justice demanded the full execution of. The nature, therefore, which lay under the curse for sin, must suffer; and in that must the atonement be made. According to which was the original promise respecting our redemption; ‘ The seed of the ‘ woman was to bruise the serpent’s head.’ And therefore the apostle urges, that ‘ Forasmuch as the ‘ children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also ‘ himself likewise took part of the same, that through ‘ death he might destroy him that had the power of ‘ death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who, ‘ through fear of death, were all their life-time subject to bondage. For, verily, he took not on him the ‘ nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of ‘ Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him ‘ to be made like unto his brethren.’ And,

*Secondly.*—It was not less necessary that the manhood he should assume should be free from sin, I mean especially from original sin, which is the source of all actual transgression, and that for some very important reasons. Namely, *First*, That it might be *fit* to be assumed into union with the *Word*, which it could not be if itself had been defiled by sin. *Secondly*; Because being to discharge the office of a Saviour, and therefore both to perform a perfect obedience, and to make a satisfying atonement for us, it was absolutely needful that he should be altogether *holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners*; for otherwise his obedience could not have been a proper and acceptable obedience, nor of consequence his

death meritorious. His obedience could not have been a proper obedience, because it would have been deficient in a perfect conformity to the law, which on no consideration, and in no view, admits of the least deviation from it; and so his death would have been but the mere execution of the curse of the law upon him for his own personal guilt: so that in this case, instead of having provided a righteousness and atonement for others, he should have needed both from some other for himself. And, *Thirdly*, Because as from our other representative and covenant-head there is derived to us a principle of sin, so from Christ believers must receive a contrary and quickening spirit and principle of universal holiness, which nevertheless could not have been the case, had he not been possessed of it himself, but born in sin as we are.

These things being laid down, we shall very readily see the meaning of our professor, when he says, “ I believe in Jesus Christ the only Son our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost. I believe in him (says he) in all those characters, among other reasons for this, because he was in that manner conceived: for as I am well satisfied of the necessity there was that the Word should have been made flesh for our salvation, and that that flesh should have been free from all sin, so I hereby declare myself to be undoubtedly assured of the fact itself,” and this is my intention in saying, “ that I believe he was conceived by the Holy Ghost;” whereby I would have it understood,

*First*,—That I believe the human nature or man-

hood of Jesus Christ was conceived by the Holy Ghost. And my meaning is, on the one hand, that what the Virgin was enabled to conceive in her womb was a complete, real, and proper man, consisting of a reasonable soul and human flesh as other men do, and of his mother's substance as other children are; in which respect there is no manner of difference between him and me, both of us deriving our substance in the womb from our respective mothers; and both subsisting of a reasonable soul and human flesh, which I as plainly discern he did, as I know I do myself. But, on the other hand, I am not less comfortably satisfied, that in regard of the manner of our conception in the wombs of our several mothers, there is the greatest difference. For whereas I was in a natural ordinary way begotten, the manhood of Jesus was conceived without the Virgin's knowing a man, by *the Holy Ghost coming upon her, and the power of the Highest overshadowing her*, whereby this child was singularly conceived. And although I know not any thing of the manner of this miraculous conception, nor have any conceit arising therefrom that what was begotten was of the substance of the Holy Ghost, or any thing other than proper man; yet hereby I am fully assured the nature of that child was *holy*, and that being conceived by the Holy Ghost, he was conceived without that infection of original sin which accompanies the conception of every one naturally gendered of Adam; of which, as I am satisfied by the manner of his conception, so am I further clearly assured by the express words of the angel, who, speak-

ing of the Holy Ghost's overshadowing Mary, adds, as the consequence thereof, *Therefore also that HOLY thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.* And that he was indeed a holy thing, without any mixture of sin; is still additionally manifest to me from his whole life afterwards, in which he always did the things which please God, and upon just grounds challenges all his enemies to *convince him of sin*; as indeed well he might, seeing he had so great and sufficient a testimony of his perfect uprightness as God's public voice from heaven, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.* But this is not all that I would be understood to mean by his being conceived by the Holy Ghost; for,

*Secondly.*—I do intend thereby further (without which indeed I could not say that the Word was made flesh) the assumption of this manhood so conceived into personal union with the eternal Son of the Father. This assumption or taking of the manhood into God, as it is the corner-stone of all his mediatorial transactions (since whatever he has done, does, or shall do, in quality of Mediator, he does, not as God simply, but as God manifest in the flesh), I find clearly set down in Scripture, where I am told *that the Word was made flesh; that God was manifest in the flesh; that Christ Jesus being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of man.* Indeed nothing is more evident to me through the whole Scriptures, especially of the New Testament,



than that that very person, who was the Son of God from all eternity, was made man in time. From the most undoubted testimonies, by the plainest declarations, and convincing actions, I am perfectly satisfied of his being at once the Son of God and the Son of man; I say at once, because while I see distinctly the divine and human natures subsisting in him, I see as distinctly that they subsist together in his own person. For by personal union I mean the subsisting together of two things different in nature in one person. So I know that the soul and body of man are of different natures, yet united they make one only person, a man. In like manner I am as well convinced that two natures subsist together in Christ, so as that, while they are two different natures, they do nevertheless make but one person. I say they do subsist together in his one person; and that without confusion: for although by their union they constitute that person, yet in that person they so subsist together as that there is no manner of mixture, or changing the one nature with or into the other; but neither nature being changed into or confounded with the other, they do both retain the acts and operations which are proper to each nature. Nevertheless, as both these natures do subsist in the same one person, the act of that person is that of both the natures together. Hence I hear Jesus saying while he was on earth, *that the Son of man is in heaven*, ascribing, in consequence of this personal union, that which was proper to the divine nature unto the human, which latter was not then, but the divine nature only, in hea-

ven. And so on the other part I find that which is proper to the human nature ascribed to the divine ; as when it is said, *God purchased the church with his own blood*, we have the action of the manhood attributed to the Godhead, and therein not only the clearest proof of the union of the two natures in Christ, but also the comfort to find that whatever the man Jesus said or did was also done and said by the Son of God.—Knowing him therefore to be God and man in one person, I do,

*Thirdly.*—Most satisfiedly and assuredly acquiesce in him as being exactly that Mediator which the glory of God on one side, and the wants of us fallen creatures demand on the other. Being God and man at once, he could in our nature perform an obedience and pay a price, which, because of his being the Son of God, could not but be infinitely honourable to the law of the divine Majesty, and infinitely satisfying of the demands of justice, therefore unquestionably available to the pardon and acceptance of all that believe in his name, sinful and ungodly though they be. And being God as well as man, the other public actions proper to his manhood (as well as his death), his resurrection, ascension, and life, must needs be powerfully efficacious to our being risen, exalted, and living for evermore in him as our representative. Had he been only God, he could not have reached our necessitous case ; had he been only man, he could not have given the needful glory to the holiness and justice of God which our rebellions had robbed him of. But now that I know him to be God and man in one per-

son, I see him capable of giving all that glory to God, and all that salvation to men, which his rights or their needs require. And therefore I see in him all the direful consequences of Adam's sin taken away. By the offence of Adam am I made a sinner? By the obedience of the other I am made righteous. Through the sin of Adam am I under a curse? By the death of Jesus I am redeemed from it. By the fall of Adam was I born in sin? Jesus has power to raise me to spiritual life. In Adam am I consigned to death? In Jesus I am risen again. As I am in Adam, is there no hope for me beyond the grave? Christ hath brought life and immortality to light. In this God-man I see myself complete. The words he has spoken to me from lips like my own can want no authority, for he that speaketh them is God. He that intercedeth for me is he that also died in my behalf, bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh, touched with the feeling of my infirmities; and I am assured I can be denied nothing he asks for me, for he that died and pleadeth for me is God. Can sin, the world, or the devil, be too strong for me, when the Son of God has in my nature vanquished them all, and is still God in the flesh for my protection and safety? This is the very person I wanted, and having such an one I can now want nothing. Gladly do I join my weak voice with that of the ministering angels, and, whilst I behold the incarnate God, sing with them, "*Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men.*"

And now you may see how much is contained in

this one sentence of the Creed, “conceived by the Holy Ghost.” Have you understood these things? It will behove you to do so, and to lay them up in your hearts, for they are very comfortable. But do you also believe them? Do you believe that the manhood of Jesus Christ was framed of the substance of the Virgin Mary by the operation of the Holy Ghost, and thereby conceived without the spot of original sin, and fitted for union with the Godhead, and for the work which the Son, as Redeemer, had to do in it and by it; and also that being thus prepared, it was actually taken into union with the eternal Word, in order to our salvation? If you do really believe this, *First*, You are very sensible of your own misery in yourself. *Secondly*, You are very thankful for this wonderful work of God. *Thirdly*, You rest all your hope concerning pardon, grace, and glory, upon an union with this God-man Jesus.

*First*.—A real belief of this incarnation of the Son implies a true sense of your misery in yourself. For the conception of the Redeemer, so directly and necessarily out of the common course of nature, plainly shews to what a sad condition the nature of man is sunk since and by the fall of Adam, while also the consequence of such apostacy is alike evident in the necessity there was of the incarnation of the Son to satisfy justice, and every way to repair the damage done by the fall.—Wherefore, to own Christ’s incarnation, as a means needful to save us, is to acknowledge our misery in ourselves, and particularly that of which all other misery is but the consequence, *the*

*sin of our nature.* And you will understand, that to believe and own your fallen nature is indeed through such a divine conviction of the truth of it as no man has, nor can have by his own reason, but is really of the Holy Ghost. So that to be truly sensible of our fallen nature, without which there can be no practical believing in Christ as God incarnate, is the very gift of God; and the experience of it, especially in the deep iniquities thereof, instead of discouraging us, should give us great encouragement, that we are at least in the way to Christ.—But, alas! how little sense is there of our miserable fallen state to be met with among those who name Christ's name? Ask any one almost you meet whether they be corrupted creatures. Many will deny it; many know not what you mean. Others will say, why, yes; who does not know that? to be sure we are all born in sin. But do you go further with them, and say, now therefore if you be born in sin, if your nature is sin, you must needs have sin in you, and truly it is visible to this day your heart abounds with pride, and self-will, and covetousness, and unbelief, and hypocrisy, and envy, and malice. “What! I? (the party will be ready to answer.) Pray what do you take me for? I proud and covetous? I am as far from it as any person in the world. Nobody ever took me for such before. And to be plain, you are very uncharitable to judge of me so hardly, and very impertinent to say what you do.” The truth is, very few people take any kind of notice of what is within them, and, if their outsides be tolerably clean, are ready to think all is

well. And yet we all alike profess to believe in Christ's conception by the Holy Ghost, that he might be free from that original corruption all others are defiled with.

*Secondly.*—If you really believe the incarnation of the Son, you are very thankful for such a wonderful work of God. Truly it is of all others the most wonderful of God's works; and St. Paul might well call it a *great mystery*, because of the unsearchable wisdom, power, condescension, and love that is therein. It is indeed so mysteriously wonderful, that the angels can find nothing in heaven like it, and therefore, as it were, forget the proper glories of their own station, to look into, admire, and adore, this unparalleled instance of God's workmanship. They sing, in the views of it, *Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men*. And if you really believe it, you will join their praises and adorations. And what say you? Is it thus with you? Is your heart affected as it ought, while you look upon the incarnate God? Does it astonish you to see this condescension; the Son leaving his Father's bosom, and assuming our nature? Do you love to look upon this glorious sight? Does it dwell upon your soul with power, and bear away every earthly thing before it; filling you with real gratitude, that you could cheerfully do any thing, and suffer any thing, and lose every thing for Jesus? And are you waiting, expecting, longing for the transporting day when you shall see and be for ever with Jesus?—This is our duty; and if we be not thus disposed towards Jesus, where

is our faith? Do we really believe that the great God is come down from heaven to be our Saviour? It cannot be. And yet in what breast almost are these honourable, these grateful thoughts of Jesus, to be found? Say, my brother, dost *thou* thus think of Jesus, thus love to think of him, thus burn for him and his interest? Ah, traitor! mayest thou not rather say of thyself, “The love of Jesus, of Jesus the incarnate God, never warmed my heart; I never look upon him, never, never, no not one moment of my life do I look upon him with love and delight. Every day I slight him, I despise him. I dishonour him, I live to his disgrace, to the hinderance, to the injury of his kingdom and the hurt of his people. I, even I, live daily confirming, strengthening, upholding, and with all my power maintaining and enlarging the kingdom of the devil. O where, where is my faith!”

*Thirdly.*—If you really believe the incarnation of the Son, you are actually resting all your hope concerning pardon, grace, and glory, in your being united unto this God-man Jesus. And this indeed is the best proof of your faith in the matter before us. As far as you see your misery and helplessness in yourself, you can have no confidence in yourself for acceptance with God, ability to serve him, and interest in his everlasting favour; and therefore, as far as, in the sense of this your misery in yourself, you are made really to believe in Jesus Christ as the Word made flesh to help you in all these respects, you will unquestionably rest all your hope in him. And here I must

observe, that it will be impossible for you to put your trust in him, with any confidence and satisfaction to your soul, unless and any further than you are persuaded that he is God-man, not only man but God, and both God and man in one person. You will not, indeed you cannot, believe there is a sufficiency in his righteousness and atonement for your pardon and acceptance, or that he is able to raise you from and above sin now, or to life everlasting from the grave hereafter, unless you believe him to be God. Wherefore your real trust in Christ for pardon, grace, and glory from the Father, in, by, and through him, can be the only satisfying proof to your own soul that you believe him to be God manifest in the flesh for our salvation. And do you thus rest your all on him? And are you thus persuaded he is sufficient for you? Search and try your hearts, for nothing but they can testify whether you have or no this faith in you.

Here, brethren, lies all your real hope; and if you turn to any other, if you are thinking to stand before God in your own righteousness, or to get heaven by your own doings, I must plainly tell you that you overturn Christianity from the very foundation, and your own soul along with it. Look therefore well to yourselves, for there is no other name under heaven given unto men whereby we must be saved, but only the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.



## S E R M O N XVIII.

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ACTS xvi. 30, 31.

*What must I do to be saved? And they said, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.*

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IN speaking of our Lord's conception by the Holy Ghost, the important point of his incarnation was opened, in regard both of its necessity and reality. Yet something still remains to be added for the further confirmation of our faith in Jesus, as the Word made flesh, and which is contained in the words that follow, *born of the Virgin Mary*. Concerning which the Believer proceeds making his profession, and declaring further the grounds of his faith, by saying,

*First.*—I believe that the woman, who was thus miraculously enabled to conceive, was a virgin at the time of her conception, and that at least she continued so till she brought forth her first-born Son. For I find that she, unto whom the Angel Gabriel was sent from God, was a virgin, that she continued so after her conception, for *before they* (Joseph and she) *came together*, she was found with-child of the Holy Ghost; and that she was really no other at the time of bringing forth, because I am not only told a *virgin shall be*

*with-child*, but also *bring forth a son*, which prophecy is applied to this very case (unto which only, according to the intention of the Holy Ghost, it did or could fully and exactly belong) by St. Matthew. And as I see the necessity of her being a virgin, because of Jesus's being conceived without the spot of original pollution, so, in her being such, I see the completion of those prophecies concerning the Messiah, in which this very thing had been foretold of him: *The Lord hath created a new thing on the earth, a woman shall compass a man. And, behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call his name Immanuel.* And further,

*Secondly.*—As I believe her to have been a virgin, so also that her name was Mary. Whereby I do not mean to ascribe any peculiar eminency to the name, but to signify that I mean thereby that Mary who was espoused to Joseph, of the tribe of Judah, to which the promise of the Messiah was made, and of the lineage of David, to whose family that promise was yet more especially confined. And furthermore,

*Thirdly.*—I do steadfastly believe that the Child, which through the operation of the Holy Ghost she did conceive in her womb of her own substance, was there nourished by the same substance of the virgin as other children are, till her full time was come, and then born into the world in like manner as are other infants.

And by all this my meaning is, that I believe that manhood which, immediately on its conception in the womb, the eternal Son of God assumed into himself

in personal union, was proper man, and that it was no other than that very person, perfect God and perfect man, who thus lay hid in the womb of the virgin, and at length was born into the world. So that, on the whole, I declare what I am fully convinced of, as a point of the utmost moment to my confidence in Jesus as my Saviour, that the only Son, by taking that manhood into himself which the Virgin Mary, of the tribe of Judah, and of the lineage of David, had by the operation of the Holy Ghost conceived in her womb, afterwards nourished there, and at length brought forth, was made flesh; from that moment subsisting God and man together in one person, not only while he was on earth, but now also that he is in heaven; and that it is that very person, God-man, who now reigneth as head over all things to his church, who shall come in power and great glory to judge the quick and the dead, and who shall be the final, full, and blessed portion and security of his purchased possession in everlasting glory.

You may see now, from the whole, that these and the former words put together amount in substance to this one point, the incarnation of the only-begotten of the Father. Upon which endearing subject I am glad to have a little space here for some necessary improvements. And,

*First.*—Was the Word made flesh for our salvation? Then what was our condition that could need such a Saviour? Consider what his business was in the world. Was it not this, to bear our iniquities, to be made a curse for us, to give his soul an offering for sin,

to be bruised and put to grief, to be crucified and slain? Who? What! the Lord of glory, the Prince of life, the Only-Begotten of the Father, the Heir of all things, the Maker of the heavens? Was it no other than he, that “for us men, and for our salvation, came down  
“ from heaven; and was incarnate by the Holy  
“ Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man?” Judge then how deep our ruin, and how insufficient all human help! Kings stoop not in person to petty concerns. Had we needed only to be taught the will of God, a mere inspired prophet had done as well. But Sin was entered into the world, the wrath of God was gone forth, Death was waiting for the divine command to seize the criminals, and Hell, with remorseless mouth, yawned behind to devour. The case was urgent. Mercy must exert itself to the highest stretch, or the human race is undone for ever. Sin was committed; the irreversible curse against it had been before denounced. What could be done? Justice must be satisfied. The Majesty of heaven must lose nothing of his glory. Unless satisfaction was made there was no place for repentance; there could have been no repentance; to men any more than devils God would not have given grace to repent; and, could there have been any, it had served no saving purpose. But who could heal so wide a breach? Who was sufficient for so vast an undertaking? The law must have more than a perfect obedience paid it, it must be an obedience which would restore it to all that honour and dignity which the most perfect and sinless submission of Adam and all his race to all its

demands would have given it upon earth. The curse declared and gone forth must be satisfied to the uttermost; and by an equivalent which would fully answer to all of us enduring eternal punishments. Death was to be overcome, yea, to be made a passage to life. The grave must be made to render back its dead, to render them back with happy advantage, incorruptible, glorious, powerful, spiritual. New heavens and earth must be prepared, and sinners of this world prepared also to inhabit them. All things must be replaced on the original footing, when God made man in paradise; and an eternal peace and fellowship restored between him and us. See, sirs, what a work! And who but the incarnate God is sufficient for it? Behold, he comes, he comes down from heaven, he leaves his Father's bosom, he takes up his residence in the virgin's womb, he is born, he is found in fashion as a man; he comes to live; to die; by death to conquer Satan, Death, and Hell; to rise again to reign; to set open the gate of life. Look upon this sight, my friends. Come near and behold it. Now that God is veiled in flesh, you may look upon him without danger; the sight will consume nothing but your pride. That indeed it will lay very low. Would God it might! Surely it ought. What have we to be proud of? Shall we be proud of our being sinners, guilty sinners, condemned sinners, helpless sinners, sinners of such magnitude that the very Son of God must needs be made man to save us from the pit of hell, the place and the portion of devils? Here is the glass in which we may see our true features. And

into this glass we have never looked to any good purpose, unless we this day know, that in ourselves we are *wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked*; and our souls be attending upon the Word made flesh in the cry of the multitudes, *Hosanna to the Son of David; blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest.*

*Secondly.*—Let us consider the amazing condescension displayed in the incarnation of the eternal Son of the Father. High as the heavens above the earth are the thoughts of God above ours. He would make known his justice, wisdom, and love, among the fallen inhabitants of the earth. And what a way past finding out doth he choose for the purpose! The express image of the Father's person shall assume the character and office of Redeemer; and therein set out to view his proper glory as the Only-Begotten. This was *a glory which he had with the Father before the world was*: but now he will illustrate it upon earth, and let men see that in him dwell all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, of grace and love. Accordingly, in the full foresight of all that he must submit to in this mediatorial capacity, he says, *Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou prepared me; in burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure: then said I, lo! I come to do thy will, O God!* He undertook it with infinite satisfaction. *I delight to do it, yea, thy law is within my heart*, in the midst of my bowels. Yet to what did he condescend in doing this will of God? The apostle will tell us in a few words, *Being in the form*

of God, he made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. It must never be forgotten that the actions of Jesus are the actions of his whole person, in which the two natures subsisting together, what is properly the act of one cannot be done without the other: in which view it is that St. Paul here speaks of his *taking upon him the form of a servant, humbling himself, and becoming obedient unto the death of the cross, who was in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God.* See here the riches of Christ! What treasures of wisdom and grace are not shewn forth in him and by him in this condescension! How honourable our incarnate God herein! *Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, says the chosen vessel, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.* Honourable to his name this voluntary poverty of his, *that he might enrich us poor.* This indeed was love. Let all the angels of God worship this condescending Creator. Let the redeemed, that come to Zion with everlasting joy, receive him with the loudest hosannas. At the name of Jesus let *every knee bow, of things in heaven and things on earth, and things under the earth; yea, let every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.* Let the happy saints above that behold his glory cry out eternally, 'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength,

‘ and honour, and glory, and blessing. Blessing and  
 ‘ honour, and glory and power, be unto him that  
 ‘ sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever  
 ‘ and ever. *And upon earth*, O thou that tellest  
 ‘ good things to Zion, get thee up into the high  
 ‘ mountain! O thou that tellest good tidings to Je-  
 ‘ rusalem, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up,  
 ‘ be not afraid! Say unto the cities of Judah, be-  
 ‘ hold your God! behold, the Lord God will come  
 ‘ with a strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him!  
 ‘ Behold, his reward is with him, and his work be-  
 ‘ fore him! He shall feed his flock like a shepherd;  
 ‘ he shall gather the lambs with his arms, and carry  
 ‘ them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that  
 ‘ are with young.’ Thus we should think of, receive,  
 and honour our incarnate God. But,

*Thirdly.*—Since our profession engages us to a conformity with Jesus, his incarnation will furnish us with some of the most exalted lessons of Christianity, and at the same time present before us the most engaging motive to practise them. We will consider as much of the mind of Christ as is peculiarly exemplified in this vast ministry of the incarnation, which perhaps maybe comprised under these three instructive particulars:—The wonderful readiness of his mind to his whole mediatorial work, in obedience to his Father’s will. The use he was inclined to make of his glorious sufficiencies. And his estimation of all worldly things. Each of which we will endeavour to apply as the time will permit.

*First.*—The wonderful readiness of his mind to his



whole mediatorial work, in obedience to his Father's will. He could say in truth, *I delight to do thy will, O God! yea, thy law is within my bowels.* Obedience was graven on his heart, and nothing could shake it. He came into the world to do God's will; that was his grand motive. Though he knew the whole of his work, and saw perfectly what the doing it would cost him, what he must endure from men, and what a sacrifice he must make to divine justice, yet with the fullest consent, with the freest choice, not of constraint (for he was under none), but willingly, he undertook the whole in obedience to his Father's will; Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered. He learned it. What! was it a lesson he had to learn? No, for the law of God was in his bowels. But now in his sufferings he practised or experienced it, or perhaps he set his hand to it, entered upon his work of suffering in the most shameful and painful part of it, and by-and-by being made perfect, having completed and finished it, he became the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him. Obedience was his business, his employment in the world. This is the mind of Christ. And is it ours, my friends? Is God's law within our hearts also? Has the obedience of Jesus Christ displayed to us the sovereignty of the blessed God, recommended to us his service, and put a glory on the law, and set it before us in its proper and desirable excellency in such manner, that now we delight therein, it is dearer to us than thousands of

gold and silver, it is our meat and drink to do the will of God? Else we have not put on Christ, and are fundamentally strangers to the mind that was in him. What! Did he come to do God's will, that he might give us encouragement to neglect it? Or does he not expressly say, 'That not every one who calleth  
' him Lord shall enter into the kingdom of heaven,  
' but he only that doth the will of his Father which  
' is in heaven.' Nothing is plainer than that God made us at first to serve him; and it is not less plain that all true believers in Jesus Christ are of their Master's mind, and, after his example, zealous of good works; for such are 'God's workmanship, cre-  
' ated in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God  
' before ordained that they should walk in them.' Now therefore, brethren, are you all thus minded? Is it the great concern of you all to serve and please God? Let your consciences say if this be nearest your hearts. If it be, if you have an unfeigned love of God's law, if in the inner man, in the very bottom of your heart, you like, approve, and heartily desire to be conformed to it in every tittle without exception, and can never be satisfied till your whole man, soul, spirit, and body, be brought at length into a perfect conformity with it; and if this inward choice be proved to be genuine and real by your constant endeavour in all things to please God, and in nothing to please your own natural inclinations, then assuredly you have the spirit of Christ, and are one of his. But if your ruling desire be to please yourself and the world; if your heart be unacquainted with

the excellency of God's law, and you find no love of it there; if you know not the restraining fear of God's power and presence in your soul, but are walking in a spirit of licentiousness and security; if your soul be without experience of divine love, and neither the loveliness nor loving kindness of God have an influence upon it to engage you to any grateful purpose of walking with and serving him; if you see not that to do the will of God is your one only business, or, though you seem to see it is, if you either seek not from his word what his will is, or make no serious inquiries whether you are performing it or no; if you live after the course of the world, and interest, pleasure, honour, direct your conduct in such a case, what would you have me say? Would you that I say you have the mind of Christ? You would judge me a base flatterer if I did, a lying prophet, a vile dissembler, a horrid betrayer of my office and your souls; your own hearts would give me the lie, as they are even now doing to any confidence you may rashly have taken up of your being in Christ.

*Secondly.*—As the incarnation of Christ teaches us obedience, so also an humble use of whatever we are and have to God's glory, and the good of others. Pride is all selfish, and wraps us up in ourselves, without regard to God or man. Under this influence we only consider what we are, to be vain upon it; and our gifts and endowments are only enjoyed to bring us in an income of homage and praise, if not from God, yet at least from man. We make no use of them to the ends they were designed for; and, any

further than the purposes of our own reputation, interest, or ease, may call them into action, they are made even no use of at all. But Christ teaches us a better lesson. *Let nothing, says St. Paul, be done through strife or vain glory. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.* To be vain-glorious of what you have, and to have no consideration of others in the use of it, he subjoins, is not the mind of Christ. He was in the form of God, and yet condescended to become a servant amongst men, and even to die for us. Did he consider his own things? Yea, did he not forget his own glory, and stoop to the meanest estate and the deepest sufferings? And why? Was it not because he considered the things of others? If he had not, would he have condescended as he did? Would he have taken up our nature, lived in a low condition, submitted to every kind and degree of reproach and suffering, to the shame, the pain, the death of a cross? All these submissions our desperate case required of him who alone was able to help us; and therefore he thus submitted for our good, to the glory of God. O, unparalleled love! who can come near it, who feel the blessed saving effects of it, without being kindled into the like flame? Brethren, what worth is there in our gifts, our talents, our time, our life, but to bestow them in this Christ-like manner? Shall Christ, forgetting himself, live for us; and we, who call ourselves his disciples, live for ourselves, and do nothing for the glory of God, and the salvation of souls? Is this the spirit of Christ, or is it a

lifeless formality? Away with all pretences to Christianity, if ye are strangers to the power and the spirit of it. And if there be any thing peculiar, eminent, and glorious in the religion of Jesus, it is, that by the power of a divine faith the soul is taken up above the narrow considerations of self, and engages in the noble views of serving men in their most important interests, as well as present happiness, to the honour of God. This glorious design evidently brought down Christ from heaven; and incontestably there is nothing but entering thereinto in subordination to him that can bring us up thither. As a point therefore of the last importance to the reputation of our religion, and the salvation of our own souls, we should enter every one of us into a serious inquiry whether this spirit be in us; whether we be acting on this plan; and whether these be the grand views we have in life, and by which all our advantages, abilities, and opportunities, are in our general course directed. Otherwise we know not the Lord, nor will he own us for his on the day that he maketh up his jewels. Yet,

*Thirdly.*—What disgrace has Jesus put upon all the pomp and pride of life! And how taken away all reproach from poverty! Who knows not that the incarnate God was born of a poor woman, was brought forth in a stable, was laid in a manger, the inn being taken up by more noble guests? Who knows not that he lived in a state of dependence, having throughout his life no house of his own to lay his head in, and being maintained by the liberality of others? This every one knows; but, alas! who considers? The

pomp of life, to be of importance in the world, to bear a sway for wealth and abundance, to live at ease, to be above the dreadful apprehension of poverty, is not this the too common character of those who profess themselves the followers of that Jesus who took upon him the form of a servant? Who almost has learnt from the low estate of the Son of man, having food and raiment therewith to be content? Who is not ashamed of poverty, and how often is it despised, though the King of glory was among the poorest of men? But such is the way of the children of this world. Their god blinds them. As they see nothing better than what lies before them, so they cannot be expected to do other than lay up their hearts in it, and to measure all their good and evil by present prosperity and adversity. But has the believer learnt all this lesson from his Master? Hast thou not still some lurking esteem of worldly honour, some secret puffing up of heart through present distinctions of place, fortune, or family? Is there not still a hankering after some figure in the world, and an uneasy apprehension of being overlooked and made no account of? Is not thy heart craving easy circumstances, dissatisfied in the want, and but too well pleased in the enjoyment, of them? It is not necessity, but pride and love of ease, which create those painful anxieties our hearts are too much acquainted with. Else how is it, that, while few if any of us want food and raiment more or less, we all want content? Let us consider the manger and the stable; and let that sight repress every ambitious thought

and every complaining fear. And let us be assured, that then we have most of the mind of Christ in us, and are furthest translated into his spiritual kingdom, when we are most indifferent about the good and most reconciled to the evil things of this present world; when neither prosperity puffs us up, nor adversity depresses us. Ah, sirs, how happy would it be for us, even here, if we had so learned Christ!

## S E R M O N XIX.

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ACTS xvi. 30, 31.

*What must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.*

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HAVING spoken of the incarnation of the Son of God from these words of the Creed, *Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary*, we proceed now to another foundation of fact, on which we build our steadfast belief in Jesus as a sufficient Saviour; namely, *Suffered under Pontius Pilate*.

There will need no more to be said concerning the words *under Pontius Pilate*, but to observe, that they are added either to determine the time of our Saviour's sufferings, because it was the manner of the Jews at that time to record the history of remarkable facts by referring to the name of the person under whose government they happened, or to account for the particular manner and nature of his suffering, and thereby to ascertain the fulfilment of certain prophecies relative thereto, and which would not have been fulfilled had Jesus suffered after the Jewish manner of punishment.



The main point is, *his suffering*. And here our believer goes forward with his profession, and declares,

*First*.—I believe that the person, of whose suffering I now speak, is that very God-man, and no other, Jesus; of whose being Christ, the only Son of the Father, our Lord, and incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, I have already pronounced my most unshaken persuasion. I believe it was this very person, and no other, that suffered; that it was he, who being the only-begotten of the Father, and Lord of all things, was made man, that suffered. Not in his divine nature did he suffer; he could not; but in his human: yet inasmuch as I know that his human nature has no subsistence but in and with the divine in one person, while I deny that the Godhead did or could suffer, I affirm that he who is God as well as man suffered; and therefore by virtue of this personal union applying the actions of the one nature to the other, I stick not to say with St. Paul, *The princes of this world crucified the Lord of glory*. And,

*Secondly*.—As I am satisfied that he, Jesus, the Son of God and the Son of man, suffered, so am I fully assured that what he suffered was the whole curse of the law. *He suffered for us*; and if so, he must needs suffer what lay against us, which was no less than the curse of the law. I believe that it was his office to redeem us from the curse of the law; and I know that he could not do this unless he were made a curse for us, because through original and actual transgression we all lay under sentence of death. All that curse which was due to our sins by the justice

of God, and was pronounced against them by his righteous sentence, I know that he suffered ; and that to the whole extent unto which the sentence reached. Therefore, since the sentence reached to the whole man, soul and body, I believe that he suffered in both. In his *body*, as throughout his whole life, so more especially in the conclusion of it, when I see him in the hands of wicked and bloodthirsty men, and treated by them with an uncommon degree of severity, cruelty, and inhumanity, till they had effected their malicious and furious purposes by nailing him to the accursed tree, where he continued till these sufferings were completed and issued in the pangs of death. In his *soul*, by inexpressible grief, exceeding sorrow, and sore amazement, when the Lord was laying upon him the iniquities of us all, and he was bearing our griefs and carrying our sorrows ; by a distress of spirit, which, however innocent, was too big to be contained, bursting forth in the most earnest prayers for the removal of this bitter cup, if, consistent with the Father's will and the ends of his sufferings, it were possible, and at the same time in a sweat which was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground. In a word, I know that he suffered in his whole man, and all the curse of the law. And,

*Thirdly.*—As I am satisfied there was necessity this Son of God in our nature should thus give his soul a sacrifice for sin, as well for perfecting the work of reconciliation as for fulfilling the Scriptures of God concerning him ; so am I assured that this his suffer-

ing was altogether effectual to all the ends designed by it, and particularly to make atonement for sin. Of which efficacy of his sufferings to take away sin I have no manner of question, as I am assured there was that in them which could not but make them every way meritorious. For I am constrained to believe there must be an infinite merit in these propitiatory sufferings.

*First.*—Because of the dignity of the person whose sufferings they were. The dignity of his glorious person I cannot comprehend when I consider him in his divine nature ‘ the Son of God, whom he hath appointed Heir of all things, by whom he made the heavens, the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person:’ neither can I reach unto the comprehension of that dignity his human nature (despised as he was, and is, and rejected of men) was exalted unto by being assumed into union with him, who is *over all, God blessed for ever*. But this I can easily conceive, that if so august a person gave himself for us, the curse of the law must by his sufferings have been fully executed, and the demands of justice paid to the uttermost farthing. I can well conceive the merit of this bloodshedding, while I certainly know that the blood shed is that of the Son of God.—Nor is this all, for as I acknowledge the merit of Christ’s sufferings, because especially of the dignity of his person; so,

*Secondly.*—Because of his perfect obedience to the law of God. Without this he might indeed have suffered, but he could have made no satisfaction for sin.

But when I know him to be a *Lamb without blemish*; when I remember that he *always did the things that please God*; when I hear God's repeated testimony of him from heaven, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased*, which he could not have been, had not that Son been an obedient Child; when I know that *he magnified the law* by submitting to it, and *made it honourable* by setting it forth before the world in its full beauty, majesty, and loveliness, through his obedience; so that the glory thereof, which otherwise had not and could not have been so seen, was brought openly before the face of the world, and displayed in its most engaging light; when I am assured that, as the representative of sinners, and as appointed by God thereunto, he fulfilled all the righteousness of the law, without coming short in the least degree of the high demands it makes upon our nature, dispositions, desires, thoughts, words, and works, in so much that the *prince of this world had nothing* in any sort *in him*: when, I say, in connexion with the dignity of his person, I consider the perfectness of his obedience, I am fully persuaded that the sufferings of such an one could not but be, what they are said to be, *of a sweet-smelling savour to God*. And,

*Thirdly*.—To complete the meritoriousness of his sufferings, I see that he was not only obedient in life, but likewise was so unto death; his suffering was the greatest and most noble part of his obedience. This completed his righteousness, for he was *made perfect through sufferings*; this crowned the whole, and finished his work of making atonement and propitia-

tion for sin. Had he not been a perfectly righteous man, he could have made no satisfaction for others, whatever he had suffered; and whatever were his righteousness, if he had not made the atonement, the curse had still stood out against us. But I see him not only obedient, but obedient unto death, in the merit of his purity and holiness going forward to make a sacrifice for sin, which not only the dignity of his person, but also the holiness of his human nature, rendered him alone capable of making, and which he could make to the full satisfaction of infinite Justice. And while I behold so great and so good a person suffering for us; while I see Divinity stooping so low, and humanity lifted so high above every thing that is in man, as through an amazing act of submission to the divine will, through the exertion of a most disinterested regard to the divine glory, and to the happiness of miserable creatures, freely to consent unto and to endure every kind and degree of suffering, which either the malice of men or devils could invent, or the vindictive wrath of God had demanded and denounced; I find all the powerful reasonings of unbelief silenced, and, bowing down before so great and astonishing an atonement, I am enforced to believe that justice is satisfied, and that even such a sinner as I have not that guilt lying upon me, which this suffering has not taken away by an ample satisfaction.—For these reasons, and upon these foundations, I cordially and comfortably consent unto the merit and efficacy of the sufferings of my Lord; and do boldly declare my steadfast assurance, that *the*

*blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin, and therefore that whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life.—But,*

*Fourthly.*—Besides the firm persuasion of the sufficiency of Christ's sufferings unto reconciliation, there are certain other consequences arising therefrom, which do so strongly present themselves to my mind, that I cannot avoid feeling the force of them. As,

*First.*—Herein I am forced to see myself in a character no way agreeable to my pride; and therefore the more mortifying, because I cannot doubt the truth of what I am, while I see the divine and holy Jesus suffering for me. Beholding these sufferings, I am constrained to own that I am a sinner and a rebel; that far from having any claim upon God's favour for the sake of any thing I do, I am guilty altogether, a criminal condemned and sentenced to die; that justice has demands upon me which I could not answer, though I should lie for ever in the bottomless pit; that in God's account of me I am what, till the sufferings of Christ taught me, I was not wont to think myself, vile even to God's abhorring me, and miserable without power of helping myself. For what have I seen in the sufferings of my Lord? What but all this? He was *holy, harmless, separate from sinners, yea, the well-beloved and the only-begotten of the Father.* Wherefore then do I see justice exerting itself in putting thee to grief? Why is thy soul thus sorrowful? And why are they buffeting, and scourging, and crucifying thee? Thou hadst done no sin, all

was for me. And what then am I? What a provoking sinner, that nothing but thy sufferings could appease the wrath of God gone out against me? The heir of hell! what an heir, that thy blood only could make satisfaction for me? O may I ever behold thy sufferings to the confusion of every high thought in me! may they serve as a glass to represent to me with increasing clearness my real vileness and desert! may every thought I have of thy agony and bloody sweat, thy cross and passion, and precious death, convince me more and more that I am nothing; that, being lowly in mine own eyes, I may render all the glory of my salvation unto thee; and that when I stand a pillar in the eternal house of thy Father and my Father through thy dying love, and behold thy glory, with the company of thy redeemed I may sing from the most humbled heart, *Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, be glory and dominion for ever and ever.*

*Secondly.*—As the sufferings of Christ have taught me the truth of my own character, so have they helped me to a plainer discovery of the true character of sin. The infinite God I know can alone be acquainted with the whole sinfulness of sin; and it is only by what he has manifested concerning it that I could have conceived any thing of its sinfulness; for I plainly see, that, till I began to know God as he has made himself known, I saw nothing of the real sinfulness of sin. But when I began to take notice that sin was the occasion of death, which was the revelation of God's righteous justice against sin, I began

also to be sensible there must be somewhat extremely base in sin, which could provoke infinite Goodness thus to rise up against his creatures. I considered the desolations that have been in the world, and saw sin more deformed. I beheld the daily bounties of God, and was struck with its ingratitude. I meditated on the endless damnation of sinners, and said in my heart, If God be not cruel, what must sin be? But when I turned my eyes on the sufferings of Jesus, then I saw plainly what a monster Sin is. There the Majesty of God presented itself to my view as infinitely affronted by it, there Justice appeared to me taking infinite vengeance upon it, and there Holiness expressing an infinite detestation and abhorrence of it. There I saw the character of God and the character of sin together; where he shewed me what himself was, there he taught me what sin was also. In the sufferings of Immanuel he shewed me both. Without these I had never known what I do of his holiness and majesty, his justice and mercy; and without this knowledge I had never discovered the true sinfulness of sin, which I now plainly see to be evil in the very degree I know God to be excellent. O mercy in God, to teach me the sinfulness of sin by that very means whereby he is reconciled to me a sinner! had he taught it me any other way, the sight of it had been despair and hell in my soul. But when he shews me sin's vileness by the sufferings of him who died to save me from the dreadful wages of it, he has taken an astonishing method of emboldening me to look on the holy, just, and avenging Ma-



jesty of heaven without fear, though I am a sinner, and yet to see sin in such colours of deformity as makes me loath and detest it, and turn from it as from the face of a serpent. O may I see in this glorious glass more and more of its vileness! may I hate it with increasing abhorrence! may I war against and crucify it with all my strength! knowing it was sin which crucified my Lord, without whose sufferings it had sunk me into the furthest hell.

*Thirdly.*—While by the sufferings of Jesus I am made to see the exceeding sinfulness of sin, I am at the same time made sensible of the riches of God's love in the method he has taken for pardoning it. If I could never have known the real sinfulness of sin, had I not seen Christ dying for sinners, much less could I have known the love of God but by this very means. The goodness of God to his creatures his daily acts might have shewn me, but that he had any love for sinners I could never have imagined if he had not told me it. Could I have conceived that a holy Governor of the world, cast off by his creatures gone into rebellion against him, should have any love towards them? But what eye had not seen, nor ear heard, neither had it entered into the heart of man to conceive, that God hath revealed, even that there is mercy with him. Nay, not only mercy, but mercy in such a way as magnifies the gift it brings beyond all comprehension and our utmost astonishment. I see the Lord of glory leaving the Father's bosom, and, since sinners must be saved, making satisfaction to infinite Justice. I see this. I see him suffering. I

know it is the very Son of God. Sometimes, while I contemplated myself, I have thought it impossible God should ever look upon me such a sinner. And when again I have considered these sufferings, declared to be endured for such as I am, I have been ready to doubt on the other part through the very vastness of this mercy; can it be so? is it possible God should stoop thus to sinners? That love, which one while seemed incapable of reaching a case so wretched as mine, another while appeared too great to be believed. I sought the Scriptures. I read the history of Jesus. Here I was brought evidently to see that he was God manifest in the flesh, while as evidently I saw that he was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. The result was, I was amazed and satisfied. I could not deny the unspeakable gift. I saw and wondered. I said, what is God? How unsearchable are his ways! Who can find him out? How high his thoughts! I said also, What is man, that thou hast such respect unto him? What am I? God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son; gave him to suffer, to die. Here, here, I said, is love. What love! O teach me to know this love which passeth all human knowledge! O it is a knowledge I long for! It is my life to know thee the true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent. Eternity will not suffice to fill up the longings of my soul after this knowledge of thy love.—But,

*Lastly.*—The sufferings of Christ have taught me the value of reconciliation with God. While I see these sufferings, and know whose sufferings they are, I am

awfully instructed what it cost to redeem the soul of a sinner, and thereby how great the blessing of being reconciled to God. Here the demands of infinite justice upon sinners are set manifestly before me. I see what they are in the sufferings of my incarnate God. But here also I see the worth of the sacrifice, and proportionably of the benefit procured by it. These sufferings teach me the double blessing of being saved from wrath and accepted to God's favour. To regard myself no longer as a condemned criminal, under sentence of death, and an heir of hell, but as a son of the Lord Almighty, whose sentence is reversed, and whose home is heaven; this is glorious. But what makes me eminently think it so is the manner by which I am thus pardoned and acquitted, thus accepted and glorified. When I see my pardon procured and my peace made through the sufferings of the Lamb of God, this shews me the misery I have escaped, and the riches I am heir to; how tremendous the one, how valuable the other! O that Christless sinners would see here their misery! and that saints would learn from hence to make a right estimate of their privileges! See, my fellow-sinners, who carelessly neglect this great salvation, see the amazing justice and vengeance of God, which stands out against you. Ye are not in Christ; therefore ye have no benefit from his sufferings. Ah, let his sufferings teach you what yours shall be! If God spared not his Son, will he spare you? If he bruised him and put him to grief, how will ye endure when the vials of his wrath shall be poured out upon your

heads? If the sufferings of Jesus made him cry out, *Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me*, what will your cry be, when you shall be drinking to eternity the dregs of the cup of God's fury? O that ye would be wise! that now, while yet there is time, ye would flee from the wrath that is to come! And ye, my brethren, who are fled to this glorious hope that is set before you, be sensible of the greatness of your privileges. Whatever they are, the sufferings of Jesus bought them for you. And let those sufferings declare their value. Ah, what a blessing that forgiveness of sins, which was so dearly bought! how valuable that peace with God, which cost so high a price! how inestimable that glory to come, which is the reward of the Redeemer's blood! See here what ye have in possession, and what ye are heirs to! Behold the sufferings of Jesus, and know your blessings, and despise the little things of the world! Behold the sufferings of Jesus, and let nothing trouble you, for surely eye hath not seen what his sufferings have purchased for you. 'If need be, ye may be in heaviness through manifold temptations:' but look unto Jesus, and behold your crown; 'look unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith, who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is for ever set down on the right hand of the throne of God.' Yea, 'consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be (and so doing ye will not be) wearied and faint in your minds.'

## S E R M O N XX.

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ACTS xvi. 30, 31.

*What must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.*

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WE have already treated of the sufferings of Christ, and considered the cause of them, and their efficacy to the purposes designed by them; and are now led on by the order of the Creed to his crucifixion and death.

As there was a necessity that he should suffer by crucifixion, to fulfil certain types and prophecies relative thereto; so was it also necessary that his crucifixion should issue in death, to the end that thereby atonement might be made for sin.

That he was indeed crucified, and that he died, are points, as to the fact, so fully set forth in the Scriptures, and with the circumstances regarding the one and the other you are so well acquainted, that I need not take up your time in describing or proving either of them. What is principally designed in the profession of his crucifixion and death is the benefits obtained thereby; for, when I declare myself assured that the Son of God was crucified and died, I mean to

profess my steadfast belief that by this means all those ends for which he was crucified and died were effectually answered. Wherefore, having shown already wherein the merit and efficacy of these his sufferings unto death do consist; to wit, in the dignity of his person, his perfect righteousness, and the most eminent exercise of obedience in his last work of giving himself a sacrifice unto God, I am now to set out particularly the ends of his sufferings and death, and to introduce the professor as maintaining his steadfast belief that they are answered by them, when he says, he not only suffered under Pontius Pilate, but adds, *was crucified*, and *dead*. His meaning is to say, I believe,

*First.*—That he not only was crucified and slain, but did thereby make a full propitiation and atonement for sin. I see, before Adam committed the sin of eating the forbidden fruit, the sentence of death denounced against him, if he should transgress that commandment, *In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die*. Wherefore, when I behold him eating of it, I plainly find him bringing himself under the before-declared sentence. Here was an act of disobedience; that disobedience was highly offensive and dishonourable to the majesty of God; and the transgressor was become by it liable to death. In this situation what could he do? He could not undo what was done; that was impossible. The fact must stand against him for ever, *Thou hast eaten of the tree whereof I charged thee that thou shouldst not eat*. This would be true to eternity from the moment of

his eating; and as long as it remained true, both the majesty of God would be offended by it, and the curse be upon Adam for it. From that moment he commenced a child of wrath, and so must have remained to eternity, for any the least power he had to help himself out of it. The fact was irrevocable, therefore the offence and the punishment. And unless Mercy interposed, and in such a way as to make amends for the offence, and to fulfil the curse, there was absolutely no more hope for him than for fallen angels. That I had been any way concerned in this fact of Adam, I could not have imagined, had not the Scriptures of God told me so; although in that ignorance I should have been utterly at a loss for the reason why myself and the whole world are born in sin, and manifestly under sentence of death. But now I see that these are penalties lying upon me and all men for the sin of Adam, and thereby that he stood as the representative of all his descendants. I can have no quarrel against this, without calling God's righteousness in question, for I see in fact the penalties of Adam's sin are charged on me; nor do I see it any thing more inconsistent that I should suffer through the sin of one covenant-head, than that I should be accepted to God's favour through the righteousness of another. And, besides this, I am fully sensible that in my own person I have been sinning after the similitude of Adam's transgression, being disobedient to his command, and putting forth my hand unto that which the Lord forbade me. So that if, before sin entered into the world, the sentence of

death was pronounced against it, whenever and in whomsoever it should be found, I am sensible that every way I am liable to that sentence; that, being a sinner before God, I have done such offence to the divine Majesty, and brought such a death on myself, as leave me, considered in myself, in an utterly undone, helpless, and hopeless condition. Nevertheless, sinful, guilty, and condemned as I am, I have confidence towards God. I see full amends made to the injured majesty of God, and the sentence of death fully executed in him, *who, though he had done no sin, was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.* I see the *Lamb without spot and blemish taking away sin by the sacrifice of himself.* I see *God purchasing the church with his own blood.* I see, and am satisfied. I am convinced and pleased that divine Majesty has received an ample vindication. I tremble no more at the sentence of death, when I behold the Son of God expiring on the cross; while I am covered with confusion at myself, (but, alas! too, too little) in the sight of that amazing sacrifice. Here I set my foot, and, finding myself safe, I boldly ask, *Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died.*—Nor is this propitiation and atonement for sin, though indeed the foundation of all my other comforts, the only one that I draw from the crucifixion and death of Christ: for,

*Secondly.*—Herein I see all my enemies vanquished. I see my Lord hanging victoriously on the cross, and conquering every adversary. Here I see that *law of ordinances*, whose multiplicity, strictness, and ex-



pense were so burdensome a yoke, which none were able to bear, abolished in the fulfilment of all its design. When Jesus died, *the veil of the temple was rent from the top to the bottom*. Here I see the *moral law*, as a law of works for righteousness, fulfilled in every tittle of its demands, and executed in every tittle of its curse, and as no longer therefore breathing out threatenings against the transgression of its precept, now impracticable by us, but changed into a pleasing rule of delightful obedience. Here I see the sting taken out of the hand of *Death*. How horrible was his countenance wont to be! I heard the thunders of Sinai when he approached me. I saw the flashes of everlasting fire breaking out behind his back. I was dismayed. I cried for mercy. I looked upon the cross. I considered who hung there. My spirit revived within me. Turning to *Death*, I said, *Where is thy sting?* I saw, and was astonished. The scene was changed. His dart terrified no more. His countenance was smoothed. He smiled, and seemed to say, I am thy friend. Here I see *hell* disappointed. *Hell* was waiting for all the race of mankind. The sentence was gone forth, and the place was prepared. The whole world was guilty without exception, and justice demanded recompense. Jesus would make atonement, and the stroke fell upon him. He died, and believers cannot perish. Here I see *the devil* dethroned. What can the accuser do, when God is reconciled; when the law condemns no more; when its penalty is executed to the full; when justice appears on the side of the sinner? See, Satan,

the issue of thy rage and malice! in persecuting the Son of God to the death, thou hast been thy own destroyer. That very death has disarmed thee of all thy might, and even such a babe in Christ as I am is able to put thee to flight. Here I see *sin* receiving its deadly blow. It was laid upon him that had done no sin. He bore it to the cross. There it was crucified, brought to public shame, and the power of it taken away. *For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.* Here, finally, I see *the world* subdued, the world in all its strength. Jesus had before defeated the attempts of worldly glory, pomp, wealth, and ease; and now on the cross he stands the shock of worldly shame and suffering; this he endured, that he despised. The ingratitude of friends, the being forsaken of all men, the being singly exposed in the hands of implacable enemies to all that malice set on fire of hell could invent or cruelly execute, made no impression upon him. *Be of good cheer, thou hadst said, I have overcome the world.* Truth, Lord, I see it to be a vanquished enemy. Thus, looking on the cross, I see all my adversaries put to confusion. But, more than all this,

*Thirdly.*—I see there the richest blessings purchased for me. There I see sin punished, and the sinner pardoned. There I see perfect reconciliation and

peace with a holy God. There the adoption of children. There the purchase of the Spirit. There the freest intercourse opened between heaven and earth. There I see the foundation of all the Mediator's glory, and of all the plenteous blessings the church receives from him. To that I owe all my mercies here, and all my hope in glory. Had not Jesus died, I had been still a child of wrath, and bond-slave of sin. But he died, and, making peace, sent forth the Spirit; that blessed Spirit, who awakened me when I lay asleep in sin, explained to me from the very word of God the precious benefits procured by a Redeemer's blood, converted my heart unto God in the power of what he showed me, and is daily comforting me in all my tribulations, and holding up my heart and my steps in my way to the heavenly Zion, where I would be.

Such now is my meaning when I say he was crucified and dead. Thus I make my profession of the atonement he made, the victories he achieved, the blessings he procured, when having, as his office was, fulfilled all righteousness, he bowed his gracious head, said, *It is finished*, and yielded up the ghost. Shall a Heathen centurion, who knew nothing of these glorious mysteries, when he saw but the manner of his suffering and death, and the signs that attended it, cry out with great fear, *Truly this was the Son of God?* and shall not I, who know him to be such by a thousand testimonies, see him submitting to be crucified and slain for me, and am acquainted with all these valuable benefits which he has thereby obtained for me; shall not I with greater joy cry out

and say, *Truly this was the Son of God?* Shall the sun, the earth, the very dead, bear testimony to the sufferings and death of Immanuel, and I feel nothing? Can I once think or say, “ he was crucified and “ dead,” without adoration, and joy, and shame, and sorrow? But,

*Fourthly.*—I am well persuaded that all my supposed belief of these great things done and obtained by the sufferings and death of Jesus would be but vain imagination, unless they had a suitable effect on my heart and life; and therefore, as an important part of my professing his death, I do further declare,

*First.*—That I judge it my bounden duty, that it is my deliberate choice, and that I am fully determined, his grace enabling me, *to live to him who thus died for me.* I declare that *I am not my own, that I am bought with a price;* and I most earnestly desire and determine to lay myself out, and all that I have, according to his will, and for his interest and glory. My time and my abilities, of whatever sort, I value chiefly for this end; and as I know that I cannot have a more noble design in life, indeed that this is the whole design of my being what I am, so do I most cordially consent unto such a conduct as shall be honourable to him, and serviceable to the interests of his kingdom. Wheresoever his interests call me out to appear for him, there I determine to go at all adventures; and although I should be alone in the midst of the earth, although all others had forsaken him, and, as Elijah supposed was his case, I only was left to confess him, yet I would not deny the

Lord that bought me, nor give any countenance to the ways of a wicked world, or encouragement to the kingdom of darkness. Let him use me as he pleases, I am his purchased possession. I hear him saying with his own mouth, *He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.* This I hear, and with it, in the full intent of the words, I sincerely consent; and, beforehand, I declare myself a traitor and a rebel, if in any thing I act contrary to them. So,

*Secondly.*—I determine and declare that I will not be moved from following my dying Master by any manner or measure of sufferings which may befall me for so doing. I expect to be a partaker of his sufferings. That I have not been more so is owing to my too-sinful conformity with the world. I have been told that *all who will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution*; nor, though I live in a Christian country, do I judge the case thereby so far altered as to give me any ground of expectation that some way or other I shall not suffer for Christ's sake: for, alas! I see this Christian country is in general but a part of that wicked world, which Christ assures me will hate the disciples as well as the Master before them. But, God enabling me, I will not be moved. I will follow my Master whithersoever he leads me, though whithersoever I go tribulations shall await me, *yea*, though I should suffer the loss of all things. If it

must be so, I will reckon the reproach of Christ greater treasures than the riches, the favour, or esteem of the world; nor can I think of forsaking him, whatever it cost me, while I think of what it cost him to redeem my soul. Can I look upon the cross of Christ, and so fear the reproach of men, and be afraid of their revilings, as to crucify him afresh, and put him to an open shame? Can I look upon the cross, and act over again the part of Judas, to serve the purposes of my interest and ambition? or, like Peter, deny that I know him, lest I should share in his sufferings? No, I have sworn and am steadfastly purposed that I will not be ashamed of Christ crucified; and that, as a faithful soldier of his, I will manfully fight under his banner, though the world and the devil should be never so furiously in arms against me; and that I will continue so doing unto the end of my days, as I have any hope of meeting him with comfort when he shall appear on the clouds of heaven.—And, besides this,

*Thirdly.*—It is not less my desire and purpose to be always conformed to the likeness of his death in the daily crucifixion and mortification of all my corrupt affections. Shall I say, as the truth is, these would have brought me to the bottomless pit, unless Jesus had died for me; these are they which caused all his sufferings and all his shame! these, more properly than any others, were his betrayers and murderers! and, when I have seen and said all this, shall I spare them, shall I give them entertainment, or deal gently with them? *They that are*

*Christ's crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts.*  
His I profess myself; and I trust I shall give him this convincing proof of the sincerity wherewith I make this profession, that I am always at war with his worst enemies within my heart. I am not rash and unadvised in this determination. I have considered the cross of Christ, and have seen what brought him thither; and therefore steadfastly protest against all those his murderers without reserve. I will yield to the pleadings of none of them. When I see I will deny them. Nay, and I will use every means of weakening their power, without sparing any manner of pains in doing so. And, since I know them to be exceedingly subtle and deceiving, I will use every help which either the word of God, or self-inquiry, or the observations of others, can afford me to bring them to light, that they may be crucified and slain, though they be as dear to me as an only son, or as useful as a right hand. Thus living to Jesus, and suffering for him, and crucifying my sins, I desire to make that profession good in my life, which I make with my mouth, when I say, I believe that he was crucified and dead.

And now, brethren, I think we can hardly have failed of making some reflections upon the whole of this declaration as it has been going forward. I would ask, Is it scriptural or no? Are these things really contained in confessing the faith of Christ crucified? If they be not, or as far as they are not, pay no regard to them, and impute it to my weakness. But, if they be the words of truth and soberness, can we adopt

and make them our own? If we cannot, where is our faith in a crucified Jesus? Shall we judge that we believe in him as saving us by his blood, if we are indulging those very sensual, earthly, and devilish affections, which were the real causes of that bloodshedding; if we would live to Christ were it not for the reproach or violence of men, but are, as it is, refusing to go forth bearing his reproach; if we are living to ourselves, and, far from considering what his honour and interests demand, are only considering and consulting our own; if we set no such value upon the blessings purchased by the death of Christ as we do on the vain riches, pleasures, and praise of the world; and, instead of rejoicing in the deliverance which Christ obtained upon the cross from all our enemies, are quietly subjecting ourselves to them, to the world, to sin; and, if so, to the devil, and then surely to the curse of the law, which is hell, and in the mean time to the fear of death? If this be our case, can we persuade ourselves that we believe in Christ crucified, or that we make any real account of his propitiation and atonement as poor, guilty, condemned criminals, who, but for an interest therein, must perish for ever? We cannot suppose it. We see plainly the contrary. But, alas! it is only while I am speaking that we think of it at all. You have seen your faces, I fear many of you, my dear friends. O forget not, I beseech you, what manner of men you are! See your deformity, see your misery, and betake you seriously to that blood to which, though you consider it not, you are daily indebted for God's



patience and forbearance. I may well say, why will you die? since it is every way so evident that God hath no pleasure in your death. Happy they who can make the profession before us, and whose hearts and lives prove the truth of it! Happy they, every hour they live! Their sins are pardoned, their persons are accepted, the Lord Almighty is their Father, all things are theirs, Satan cannot hurt them, Death is their friend, the Spirit their Comforter, Heaven their home, and they are hastening daily to it. Ah! who would not be able to say, "I believe in Christ crucified?"

## S E R M O N XXI.

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ACTS xvi. 30, 31.

*What must I do to be saved? And they said, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.*

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FROM our Lord's crucifixion and death we pass on to his *burial* and *descent into hell*. The history of the former, in all its circumstances, is plainly set forth in the Evangelists, to whom I shall refer you for the truth and particulars of it. And as to the latter, without troubling you with the various opinions relative thereto, I shall be content to declare only what appears to be the true one, that the soul of Jesus, being separated from his body by death, was conveyed, during the time of the separation, into such receptacles as the souls of other persons used to be, so that he underwent the whole law of death, as it became him to do who was made sin for us, his body lying in the grave, and his soul going to the place where the souls of men who die for their own sins are kept till the day of resurrection. In a word, that as he died, so he was in death just what other people are.

But the believer has other things in view than

the bare acknowledgment of the fact, when he says, “ I believe that he was *buried* and *descended into* “ *hell.*”

*First.*—He professes that Christ was both buried and did descend into hell, as well to declare his belief of the absolute certainty of his death, as thereby to prepare the way for his assent to the reality of his resurrection, which must be strictly and truly such, if his body was thus laid in the grave, and his separated soul departed to the place provided for the spirits of men when disunited from the body. The believer, therefore, means to declare his steadfast persuasion that Jesus was in every respect dead ; not only crucified, but actually and perfectly dead, so that if afterwards he was alive again it was a proper resurrection. But this is not all his meaning. He intends to say further and principally,

*Secondly.*—That he condescended to this state of the dead in discharge of his office. This, as it was the lowest condition of his abasement, so was it not less necessary than any other of his actions. He was the representative of sinners ; and, as they were not only partakers of flesh and blood, but also, because of sin, under sentence of death, their soul and body to be torn asunder, *this* to return to the dust, and *that* to exist in a state separate from its old companion till the day of reunion ; therefore it behoved him not only to make atonement for sin, and thereby to take away the eternal curse of the law, but also to submit to the further humiliation of being for a season in the state of the dead both in body and soul. For a sea-

son, I say; for there was not only an impossibility that he should be holden of Death, and detained his prisoner as others are, because of the power of that divine nature, in union with which both his body and soul did subsist, while the one was lying in the grave, and the other was descended into hell; but also there was no necessity for it, because, Justice being now satisfied, Death had no right in him or claim upon him. And therefore, when he had lain in the state of death long enough to be in all things like unto us, after a short season he was loosed from the pains or rather bands thereof, to convince us that Death was a vanquished enemy, which had no force nor right to detain him, who, being the Son of God, had taken away sin by the sacrifice of himself. Wherefore,

*Thirdly.*—I am persuaded that he lay in the state of death in a peculiar way, not as one conquered by Death, but as he, who, having overcome upon the cross him that had the power of Death, went into the state of the dead to take possession as it were of the first-fruits of his victory. He lay in the state of the dead indeed, that in every thing he might be like unto us; and, while I see him in this estate, I acknowledge the horrid vileness of sin, which brought the Lord of glory to such an abasement: I confess myself to be sinful dust and ashes; I own my utter insufficiency to maintain myself against the approach of Death, or to deliver myself out of his power, when he shall once have seized and carried me into his dark abodes: but though Jesus lay in the state of the dead,

it was to rob Death of his terrors, to make it appear that now there is nothing so formidable in the laying down this earthly tabernacle in the grave, or in the soul's departure from the whole present state of things into an untried, unknown, and unimagined kind of subsistence without the body in a spiritual world. In this state of the dead my Lord made a short continuance in his way of glory; he explored the depths of these mansions that wait for me; he made a visit to the grave and hell; he went as a forerunner, to let me see that though the way be dark it is not dreadful; he would go through it himself before me, that I might be reconciled to the passage by which I must go to everlasting life. (He went as a Conqueror to receive the submission and the homage of this old king of terrors, even in his own dominions.) When at any time I forget my Lord was buried and descended into hell, I find something more than awful in the thought of my *body's* being laid in the grave, eaten up by worms, and mouldering to dust; and I am ready to say to my *soul*, to what unknown condition wilt thou be transported when thou must leave the things that are here for ever? Wilt thou be reduced to nothing? or wilt thou wander up and down, at the will of other more powerful spirits, visiting tombs, and hovering about the solitary places where bodies sleep? or what else will become of thee? But, when I see Jesus in the state of death, I am reconciled and perfectly set at ease. I cry out, Grave, where is thy victory? I say, my Redeemer was buried and descended into hell, and I will securely venture where he has gone

before me; though I know not what it is to die, though the grave and hell import a state wherewith I am utterly unacquainted, yet will I cheerfully enter the unexperienced regions of the dead, and fear no evil from a state of being which my Saviour by his presence therein has vindicated from possibility of misery. But,

*Fourthly.*—While I thus declare my belief of Christ's burial and descent into hell in the execution of his mediatorial office, and to make the way to heaven safe and comfortable, I profess my obligation and purpose of being conformed hereunto.

*First.*—In an acknowledgment of the vanity of my present estate.

*Secondly.*—In a daily dying to this present life.

*Thirdly.*—In preparing myself for the approaching state of separation.

*First.*—When I profess that Christ was buried and descended into hell as my representative, I mean to acknowledge the vanity of my present estate. Pride did once persuade me to think myself something. It suggested to me the health, the vigour, the comeliness, of my body; it whispered to my foolish heart the more noble qualifications of my reasonable powers, my parts, and wisdom, and knowledge; it insisted on various things that distinguished me from others, and intimated that I was lord of the creatures. Fired with the too-pleasing thought, I conceited myself considerable, and was restless to be more so. I would make a figure; I would not remain destitute of any reputable qualification, I would enlarge my circum-

stances, I would have wherewith to take my full range of ease and pleasure. I said, when I shall have obtained such additions, and disengaged myself from such restraints, I shall have the full desire of my heart. Thus was I borne along by the pride of life, depending altogether upon the supposed sufficiencies of this present world, when Providence brought death before me by taking off a dear relation. I attended the dying bed. The sight shook my confidence, I saw the labouring body panting for breath, the whole frame shattered even to the loss of every sense, and heard the expiring groan. I retired in confusion, and was forced to say, Surely man is vanity! what profit or help can the world afford against death? I felt the meaning of these awful words, *What is man that is a worm, and the son of man that is a worm?* I said, I will be wise, I will consider my latter end. My friends came about me; with a decent civility they lamented my loss, said something of the departed, and fell into ordinary conversation for diverting my grief. I thought the discourse unseasonable; the views I had before me could not permit me to relish it. They departed, and others supplied their place with the same mistaken kindness. The last ceremonies for the dead passed over; I returned to my former employments. Insensibly my eyes closed to the thought of death, and the world began to recover its former importance. Just then Mercy interposed. A thought, I know not how, forced itself upon me, that death was the wages of sin. It lay upon my mind. It would not be removed. Death seemed near, and

I saw sin was the only cause of it. It came so mightily upon me, that I was driven to my knees. I grew uneasy. I took the Bible. Every word I read condemned me. I could see nothing behind me but sin; and Death stood threatening to cut me down. I plainly saw my misery and helplessness. Where-with could I possibly come before the Lord? I soon found there was no help for me but in God. But would God have mercy upon me? I had heard of Jesus, and had a thousand times called him my Saviour; but now I found that I had never believed him to be the Saviour he is. Yet I knew there was no help for me but in him. I was satisfied that I must search the Scriptures, which testify of him. I did so both with diligence and importunate prayer. From that blessed book the light shone upon me. I saw there that he was the Son of God, and grew by degrees acquainted with the purpose of his coming into the world. The more I knew of this amazing method for saving sinners, the more I admired and liked it. I saw the import and meaning of all the actions of Jesus, his life and death, his resurrection from the state of death, and exaltation to the right hand of God. These shewed me my real character as well as God's. Here I have seen and do see myself a sinner, a criminal, a wretch consigned to the dominion of death, and by death to be delivered over to judgment and hell. Hence I have learnt to judge what the world is, and every man in it. In my continual thoughts I follow my Redeemer from heaven to the cradle, from the cradle to the cross, from thence to the grave and hell,



and all for any salvation, and cry out in the bottom of my spirit, What then is man? O what a lie is pride! And where are all the sufficiencies of the world? I say to my soul, The Lord of glory took on him thy estate, to save thee; and see whither it has brought him, low as the very grave and hades. See, my soul, see the truth of thy condition! It is this teaches me what I could never learn from the death of thousands about me, from all the uncertainties and vexations of life, from all the reasonings with which philosophy could furnish me, nay, which I never knew from all the Scriptures of God, till I learnt from them the meaning of Christ's death, burial, and descent into hell. Here I learnt the vanity, the misery, of myself and the world. Here all my pride bows, and I feel myself to be nothing, and all the pomp of life to be a dream and delusion. Wherefore,

*Secondly.*—Knowing, as I thus do, the vanity of my present estate, I profess it my duty, and declare that it is and shall be my daily endeavour, to die unto it. I look on myself as in the grave with Christ. I acknowledge the import of my baptism, and regard myself as *buried with him therein into death*. That burial I purpose, God enabling me, to make good. I am dead to sin by profession, being buried with him; nor can I any further engage my heart in the pursuits of this present life. I have determined therefore, as one buried with Jesus, to live the rest of my time upon earth in the constant mortification of every earthly affection. I will look upon my Master lying

in the grave, and say, Lord, I will die with thee. My life is at thy disposal; take it when thou pleasest, when thou needest for thy interest and glory. And while thou sufferest me to be here, still will I die with thee; for as one dead I have renounced the world. As if I were already laid in my grave, I will endeavour to disregard the pleasures, the interests, the praise, the honours of life. O take me more abundantly out of this present evil world, and fashion my heart and life into a greater conformity to thy death and burial! Enable me increasingly to die to the things of sight and sense; to use the world as not abusing it; to be content in every state; to enjoy the blessings of life with a greater indifference and readiness to part with them at thy will; to endure every kind of affliction, especially for thy sake, with enlarging patience and thankfulness; to fear always, and peculiarly in every change of condition; to sit more easy to good as well as to evil report; to be more disengaged from the men as well as things of the world; to get further above the influence of worldly example and man's authority, the apprehension of poverty and the dread of depending on others; and grant that I may be able to prove more and more the truth of this my death, through the Spirit, to every present thing, by the meekness, the forbearance, the peaceableness, the liberality, the contentedness, the absence of all carefulness for the morrow, manifest in my whole conduct. Lord, I would be perfectly buried with thee; I would have the whole spirit of a pilgrim here upon earth. Like one seeking another

country I would live. O let me have the whole proof of thy burial in my heart and life. And let me testify my belief of thy burial and descent into hell by such a temper and conduct as shall convince those who observe my conversation that there is a power in thee as it were lying in the grave to raise the souls of thy people above the love of every thing great, and the dread of every thing terrible, here below; and to force the world of unbelievers to own, that there is that in thy religion which can make a man, even in the abundance of all things, to desire to depart and be with thee as far better. Thus do I determine, endeavour, and pray to die daily unto this present life, as buried with thee. And,

*Thirdly.*—In conformity with thy lying in the state of the dead, I would be preparing for my approaching state of separation. I determine to regard, and desire to treat, this *body* of mine as under sentence of death, as soon to depart into the grave where my Lord also lay. Wherefore I am resolved to bring it under and keep it in subjection, that in none of its appetites it may have the indulgence which I well know it will be always craving. I will endeavour to maintain it in the strictest temperance, nor will I give it any allowance of sloth or excess. I will no more pamper it with gluttonous or luxurious living, nor yield to any of its solicitations for gratification in drink, nor suffer it to defile my soul with its lascivious inclinations. I will be continually putting it in remembrance that it had a principal hand in the first sin, that it has led me into numberless iniquities,

that it is soon to return to the dust out of which it was taken, and, were it not for Jesus, that it would lie for ever in the flames that never shall be quenched. I will prepare it as I can for the departing hour, and reconcile it to the expectation of being laid in the grave by the consideration of Christ's burial. In a word, it shall be waiting for the change, and taught to meet it without drawing back.

And for my *soul*, it shall be my endeavour that it be every day more and more furnished for the world of spirits. To enter into that invisible world, nothing but holiness, I am well assured, can prepare me. I will not therefore say, Soul, thou hast grace enough already to qualify thee for a happy departure; but, soul, the day is at hand, put on the whole armour of light. Thou must soon go into the invisible world; if thou have not faith, thou wilt not be bold to adventure when the hour of departure comes; nor must every measure of faith be sufficient, but thy faith must be fruitful, it must make thee love God and man; yea, and thy faith and love must be such as will make thee full of the hope of glory. Now, therefore, forget what is behind, and reach unto what is before. Thou must be adding grace unto grace. Thou must be living a great deal more in heaven. My soul, thou must not be weary in well-doing; if thou wilt reap, thou must not faint. Christ went unto the place of separate spirits; art thou ready? art thou willing to go thither also? What! art thou not yet prepared? Art thou desiring a further respite? Then be diligent, make all things sure. Art thou afraid of

going into the untried estate, where spirits only dwell? Think more of Christ's descent. Be more persuaded there is no danger in the way he trode before thee. Have it more upon thy heart, that this is the only way to heaven. To-day, said Christ to the thief, thou shalt be with me in paradise: and wilt thou be afraid of being in paradise also? Thus am I determined to exercise myself in body and soul, preparing for my state of separation. And, were I not thus employed, I could not persuade myself that I had any real belief of Christ's burial and descent into hell in the discharge of his office, and as the representative of believers.

You see here what is the real meaning of this, as you have before of the former points of faith. And if the article before us mean all this, may we not well take up Christ's words and say, *When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?* Be pleased to observe, that the end of hearing sermons is not to pass an hour in what is called a good way, but that we may enter into the reproofs, the corrections, the instructions, that are ministered to us. God expects, therefore, we should consider that we have heard this day, examine ourselves by it, lay it up in our hearts, and be the better for it. Let us look to it, I beseech you, for God will not be mocked; and it is easy to see who will be the losers in the end, if we will not take heed how we hear. Give us grace, therefore, O Lord, seriously to consider before thee what we have heard from thee; and grant, that as we are baptized into the death of thy blessed Son our

Saviour Jesus Christ, so by continually mortifying our corrupt affections we may be buried with him, and that through the grave and gate of death we may pass to our joyful resurrection, for his merits, who died and was buried, and rose again for us, thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

## S E R M O N XXII.

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ACTS xvi. 30, 31.

*What must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.*

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THE argument, upon which faith in Jesus as an all-sufficient Saviour does stand steadfast and unshaken, lies in the united efficacy of his qualifications and transactions. Knowing him to be Christ, the only Son of the Father, our Lord, and knowing also that he has done, is doing, and will do, all that the glory of God in the salvation of us his fallen creatures could require, we remain satisfied that he is *able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him.* We have been for some time considering the latter part of this argument, and bringing forth the grounds of fact upon which, in concurrence with the qualifications of Jesus, we rest assured of his being Jesus a Saviour; and now proceed in that view to his resurrection from the dead.

We have seen him as the man of sorrows, and have attended him to the cross, the grave, and hades. Henceforward we are to view him in a more splen-

did character, to see his divine nature displaying itself in a more glorious manner, and his human nature highly exalted, his reasonable soul enriched with all knowledge and grace possible to a creature, his body spiritualized and glorified, and his whole person advanced to the highest honour at the right hand of God.

That circumstance of his exaltation which relates to his *resurrection* is now to be considered. Concerning which our believer proceeding in his profession would be understood to mean,

*First.*—I am satisfied of it as an unquestionable matter of fact, proved to be such by the most incontestable evidence, that both Jesus did rise again from the dead, and also that he did so on the third day, according to the Scriptures. *As Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so was the Son of man to be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.* But *his soul was not to be left in hell, neither his flesh to see corruption.* And I have the most undoubted testimony that on the third day he actually rose from the dead; for on the third day in the morning the women cannot find him in the sepulchre, an angel assures them he is risen from the dead, presently they see him alive, as do his disciples in a body that very evening, unto whom then, and frequently afterwards, he gives the most evident proofs that it is he himself, not a spirit, but that very same person whom they so well and familiarly knew upon long acquaintance; that same body, which they knew had been crucified and left in death, now



again joined unto that same soul which before informed it. Nor is there wanting a standing testimony of fact to the truth of his resurrection unto this very day. For if he be not risen from the dead, he cannot be in heaven; but yet that Holy Ghost, who was promised solely upon his going to the Father, was not only poured out in miraculous gifts on the Apostles and others, but on them and all believers since in all sanctifying operations, as the declared consequence of his life and dominion at the right hand of God. He rose from the dead. And no wonder, since even while dead he was the Son of God; the union of the two natures still subsisted; and though the two parts of the human nature were separated, yet neither part was for one moment disunited from the divine. Wherefore I do not say, he *was raised* from the dead (although raising the dead be evidently a work of divine power), but he *rose* from the dead, as being possessed of that divine power in himself whereby he rose. Nor, although I find his resurrection ascribed to the Father, have I reason therefore to question that he raised himself, since I find him taking this work unto himself in these plainest words of his, *Destroy this temple* (speaking of his body), *and in three days I will raise it up*. Acknowledging therefore the unity of the eternal Trinity, I find myself under no difficulty to say, he rose again from the dead, while also I say, God the Father effected and wrought that work.—Thus I declare myself perfectly satisfied of the truth of this important action. But this is not all my meaning: for when I

say, "He rose again the third day from the dead,"  
I do,

*Secondly.*—Intend to express my belief of certain glorious benefits which are hereby held forth and secured to me. For hereby I plainly see, not only that he is the Son of God, evidently approving himself such by this divine act of rising from the dead, but that as the Son of God rising from the dead in the discharge of his office he has made the most public declaration,

*First.*—Of the justification of the ungodly by his death.

*Secondly.*—Of his being Lord of all things.

*Thirdly.*—Of the resurrection of all the members of his body. Wherefore,

*First.*—When I say, he rose again the third day from the dead, I profess my belief of there having thereby been made the most public declaration of the justification of the ungodly by his death. He died for our sins. And the way whereby I am assured that, by the sacrifice of his death, he took away sin in respect of its guilt and punishment, is, that I see him rise again from the dead: because, inasmuch as I know that death is the wages of sin, I am assured he could not have risen again from the dead unless by his death he had made satisfaction to the justice of God for sin, whereof death was purely the wages. I know him to be a public person; that he undertook for sinners putting himself in their place; and that our sins, with all their consequences, were imputed to him. But now I see him who thus was made sin for us

risen from the dead. Hereupon I ask myself, was not death one of the consequences of our sins? And if it was, how is it that I see him that was charged with our sins rising out of the grave? Could this possibly be if the atonement had not been satisfactory? This I dare not deny, unless I would assert that he was not made sin for us (in which case I could not find the least imaginable cause of his death), or unless I would insist that death was not a consequence of sin. Wherefore, when I see Jesus alive from the dead, I discern the most public testimony of God the Father to the availableness of his satisfaction, and Jesus not only proclaiming publicly the justification of ungodly sinners, but also, as it were by a legal procedure, when he had satisfied the demands that justice had against them, taking out their acquittal. Thus I declare my belief of his rising again for our justification; and while I cannot question the reality of his resurrection, I have such an answer at hand to the accusations of conscience as silences them all. In the sight of all my numberless iniquities, the penalty of the least of which is death, I take up my word, and say, *It is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again. It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth?* I think it now no longer strange that the whole office of the Apostles is declared to be this one thing, “to witness the resurrection:” for, if it be true that he rose from the dead, it cannot but be evident that he is the Son of God; that by his death there had been made full propitia-

tion for sin ; consequently that in his name, and his only, there is salvation.

*Secondly.*—I regard the resurrection of Jesus as a no less public declaration of his being Lord of all things. He was indeed not put into public possession of dominion over all things till he sat down at the right hand of God ; but before this he plainly showed by his resurrection his power over all things. When by his sacrifice on the cross he had made satisfaction for sin, it remained only that he should take possession of his conquests, and proceed to lead his enemies captive. The two first of these were the grave and hell. Into them the Conqueror enters, and rising from thence declares them vanquished. “ See,” he says as it were by this action, “ the first-fruits of my victory. I was dead, and am alive again. It was declared in my name of old, *O death, I will be thy plagues ! O grave, I will be thy destruction !* and behold the fulfilment of this word in my resurrection from the dead. See then if I am not the Lord, who have all power in heaven and earth. It is I that have the keys of death and hell ; I took them by my might out of the hands of him that had the power of death.” Yea, Lord, my soul replies, I acknowledge thy dominion. As the only-begotten of the Father, thou art Lord of all things by the right of Deity ; and here I see thee, in the mediatorial character, eminently proving thy dominion over all things. I see thee, in despite of Satan, strengthened as he was by the curse of the law, going down and leading Death

captive. I ask, who is this that cometh up from the grave? This whom Death cannot detain? Who by his arm bursts asunder the gates of darkness, and brings Death, disarmed of his scythe, from forth his black dominions? What man, what God, is this? He must be man to be capable of rising, and God to rise by his own power. And if he died and rose again, (and what marvel, if he did die, that he should rise again?) he must needs be Lord of both the dead and the living. I own thy dominion. With Thomas, I, alas! too slow of heart to believe, cry out upon the force of such conviction, *My Lord, and my God!* I yield myself to thy dominion. O keep me by thy matchless power; keep me from the curse of the law, which thou hast taken away by bearing it; keep me from the rage of Satan, whom thou hast vanquished; keep me till death, and keep me in death, my departed spirit in paradise during its state of separation, and my body, when it shall be reduced to its original dust, unto the day of resurrection; and then, thou Lord of all things, bring me forth soul and body from the state of death to glory and life, according to the working whereby thou art able even to subdue all things unto thyself: for I declare thee to be, what by thy resurrection thou hast declared thyself, Lord of all. And,

*Thirdly.*—I avouch in thy resurrection that of all the living members of thy body. This thou, as the head, didst declare when thou didst rise from the dead. Are they real members of thy body, actually joined unto thee? And how then couldst thou rise from the

dead, and they not be risen with thee and in thee? Art thou only risen for thyself? or was it thy whole design in rising to assure that there shall be a resurrection of the dead? Didst thou not rise as the representative and head of thy people? And, if so, does not thy resurrection declare them risen with thee? Thou art risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept. What meaneth this? Are first-fruits only an assurance of an harvest ready at hand? are they not even parts of it? Else how were they first-fruits? Thou didst not die nor rise again to thyself. Thou didst die for us, and when thou camest out of thy grave didst declare us risen in thee. I know that thou art alive from the dead, and, believing in thy name, I know that I am joined to thee, and therefore risen with thee. We know that our Redeemer liveth; and we know for that reason his people are as surely risen with him as if they had already heard the sound of the last trumpet, and he had now fashioned their vile body like unto his glorious body. They must pass through the grave, and after their flesh worms shall destroy this body, yet Jesus by his resurrection declares them already risen in him. O how unspeakable the benefit and the comfort of this faith! Did I not experience the power of my Lord's resurrection in the influence it has upon me, and the comfort it gives me certainly to know that I am risen with Christ, I should certainly conclude that I did not truly believe that he was risen from the dead. As an important part therefore of my profession, when I say, I believe that he rose again the third day from

the dead, I mention this my steadfast belief of my being risen with him, wherein I avow my obligation of conformity to his life, and the cause I have to triumph in this belief against the fear of death.

*First.*—Believing that we are risen with Christ, I avow my obligation of conformity to his life. As one risen with Christ, it is my duty, my desire, and my purpose, to seek those things which are above, and to set my affections on them, and not on things on the earth. I would be continually reflecting how one who is risen with Christ to a spiritual and eternal world ought to live while he is here upon earth; what should be his views, his ruling objects, his aim and pursuit; what he should renounce and what cleave to; to what he should sit indifferent and what he should value; what he should fear and what he should desire. I would be often thinking within myself, were a man really risen from the dead, as we now only are in our representative, what would be his employment? What thoughts would he have of God, and of Jesus, and what of the world? And I would be endeavouring to draw my spirit and conduct into an increasing conformity with the same, as far as my circumstances in this life should possibly permit. I would live in the world as taken out of it; and, though I am not in heaven, I would live as if I were in it. I would have my mind under the influence of God's presence as if I were standing at his right hand, and I would by faith behold the glory of Jesus as if I saw him upon the throne of his glory; I would have my heart delighting in the worship and

service of God as if I was joining in the anthems of heaven, and my soul stood ready like the angels to do God's commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word; I would love others as if I were placed in the mansions of the blessed; I would live to the glory of God, as if there were none around me but his most dutiful servants; I would have every sensual, earthly, and devilish desire dead in me, as if I were numbered among the spirits of just men made perfect; I would regard the world as if I was in heaven, neither debauched by its gratifications, nor distressed by its adversities; I would be pleasing God in all things as they do in heaven, myself in nothing, nor those who are about me but for their good to edification; and in all things I would be pleasing God with a heavenly cheerfulness; I would yield to no worldly bias, nor consult my ease, or interest, or indulgence, any more than if I was lying in the bosom of Abraham; to say all in a word, I would be just like Christ; *as he was, so would I also be in the world.* As risen with him, I would esteem nothing in the world but for the use I might make of it to the glory of God and the happiness of my neighbours; I would lay myself out in doing good, nor count my life of any consequence but as it might serve these best of purposes. Thus would I have my conversation in heaven as being risen with Christ. I would—but, alas, how do I fail! yet this is my desire, my aim, my endeavour. And though in every thing I come short, yet still I am determined to press on, to give no ground willingly to my spiritual enemies, nor to



give out in discouragement (though after all I am nothing), but be labouring to grow into a greater conformity with the life of Jesus. Give me leave to interrupt the professor one moment, while I observe that these are his real desires under the influence of faith in a risen Redeemer; and how different they are from the prospects and purposes of those whose hearts are given up to the pleasures of the world, and the pride of life, is too obvious to need any illustration. O what a wide distance is there between a state of unbelief and of faith! But to proceed,

*Secondly.*—Our believer avows the cause he has to triumph against the fears of death in the belief of his being risen with Christ. Is Christ risen from the dead, he says, and are we risen with him? Is he, who died for our sins, risen again for our justification? Hereby is the resurrection of true believers put out of question? And can we not effectually rise with Christ till we are passed through the grave, whither he went before us? Then surely I see the sting of death taken out. Is death formidable because it is the wages of sin? But Jesus declared the justification of believers, and publicly took out their acquittal, by rising from the dead. But do we still fear, because death is a state of separation, an unknown and untried state, from whence no one hath come to give an account of it, and whereof it has not pleased God to give us any particular information in the Scriptures, and concerning our deliverance out of which many distressing apprehensions are apt to arise? Yet

still the resurrection of Jesus will bear us out here also. For where is Jesus? He is not in the grave, he is risen, and is alive, and liveth for evermore. The comfort is that we are risen with him. And if he be risen, and we with him, then the darkness of the passage, or any thing else relative to that state, need not make us afraid. Here I see support against death as the wages of sin, and death as the laying down of these earthly tabernacles; even in this one word, "Christ is risen from the dead. Why then art thou so heavy, O my soul! and why art thou so disquieted within me?" Why doth death appear so terrible? Is it because thou art not willing to part with the world? No, not so. Is it then that thou art afraid of the consequences? Wherefore? Because of sin? But see here Christ has proved *that* to be taken out of the way. Or is it because thou knowest not what death is, and what shall come after it? But say not that neither, my soul, for thou art risen with Christ, and heir to all that he inherits; and wouldst thou desire a better estate than to be with him where he is? Dost thou really believe Christ is risen? Think then of that; be strong in that faith; weigh well the import of his resurrection; and thy fears will assuage, Death will lose his terrors, and thou wilt be ready to cry out, *Death, where is thy sting?* Or rather with the great Apostle, *I desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better.* Lose not, my soul, the comfort of believing. Let thy faith in a risen Jesus raise thee to a newness of life; and then

stagger not through unbelief, for, as surely as Christ is risen from the dead, he rose for thy justification, and thou art risen with him.

Let us conclude the whole with the Collect for Easter-day. “ Almighty God, who, through thy only-  
“ begotten Son Jesus Christ, hast overcome death,  
“ and opened unto us the gate of everlasting life, we  
“ humbly beseech thee, that as by thy special grace  
“ preventing us thou dost put into our minds good  
“ desires, so by thy continual help we may bring the  
“ same to good effect, through Jesus Christ our  
“ Lord; who liveth and reigneth, with thee and the  
“ Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end.  
“ *Amen.*”

## S E R M O N XXIII.

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ACTS xvi. 30, 31.

*What must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.*

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HAVING considered Christ in his resurrection from the dead, we are next to follow him to his *ascension into heaven*.

By *heaven* here is to be understood both a place and a state. A place it must needs be; for the body of our Lord was taken away from this earth. *While he blessed his disciples, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven*; from earth to heaven, from the place where he then was to that where he now is; to a place *far above the heavens*, above the region of the clouds, which is the first heaven, to that which is called the heaven of heavens, wherever it be, the most glorious place of God's manifestation of himself to his creatures. And as a place, so a state. A state of the highest glory and blessedness: for, *We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour*.

That he ascended into heaven, we have the most

assured testimony. For the Holy Ghost witnesses, that *While they beheld he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight.* He did not vanish as an apparition; but, while they were looking upon him, he was taken up, a cloud, namely, the Shechinah or glory of the Lord, the visible symbol of divine Presence, covering him about, and carrying him up leisurely into heaven, so that they might see him going up, till he and it were gone beyond the reach of their sight. Nor is there only the testimony of the disciples to this truth; for, *While they looked steadfastly toward heaven, as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.* If there be still further need of witness, the truth of his ascension is manifest from his sending the Holy Ghost. Upon this ground he himself places the necessity of his going to heaven; *If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you: but, if I depart, I will send him unto you.* And soon after his departure the Comforter did come unto them; than which there cannot be a more evident proof that he was indeed ascended to heaven unto the Father.

But however true the fact be, yet this is not all the professor has in view, but he means to declare his belief also of the force, import, and influence of such truth, when he says, *He ascended into heaven.* For,

He would be meant to understand and declare, that Jesus ascended into heaven in a public character, as the representative and head of his members. He believes they are no less ascended into heaven with him, than risen from the dead in him. His actions, he knows, are all public, for otherwise he sees not why the Son of God should come into the world. And therefore,

*First.*—When he says, He ascended into heaven, it is as if he said, I profess my belief that thereby he opened the gate of everlasting life for his people. He went away into heaven, into the more immediate presence of God. Sin had shut us out from an earthly paradise, Jesus takes possession of an heavenly one for us. *I go to prepare a place for you: not for myself only, but for you also. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.* True it is that *Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you.* Ye are not now in that *presence where is fulness of joy*, nor admitted to be at his *right hand, where there are pleasures for evermore.* But I have made the atonement; your sins are blotted out; and, behold, *I ascend*, in the merit of what I have done for you, and in your name and behalf, *unto my Father*, and therefore now *your Father, and unto my God and your God.* And *I go to prepare a place for you: and if I go away I will come again, and take you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also.* Thus he spake while on earth, and I see him verifying his word when he went away into heaven. The gates lift up their head, the

everlasting doors were lift up, and the King of glory, the Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle, came in. He came in, he set the doors of heaven wide open, he gave us boldness and liberty to enter into the holiest by the new and living way which he hath consecrated for us. When I ask myself, where is Jesus? and answer, he is passed into the heavens, I see my nature exalted to the very place and state where I could wish it to be; heaven taken possession of, mortality swallowed up of life, the last hand put to the work of redemption, and that nothing now remains for the exalted Jesus to do but to make his people partakers of all his victories and triumphs; in short, I see in the ascension of the head the full and glorious ascent of the members, according to the prophecy relative to him, and to them in him: *The breaker is come up before them; they have broken up, and have passed through the gates, and are gone out by it; and their King shall pass before them, and the Lord at the head of them.* But,

*Secondly.*—While I thus profess my belief of Christ's ascent into heaven in a public character to open a way thither for his people, and to prepare a place for them, I do further understand, that in so doing he led captivity captive. By his ascension he evidently triumphed over all our enemies that before had dominion over us, and most plainly led them as vanquished foes behind the chariot in which he went up to his glory. By this glorious act he fully explained his victory. It is no longer in any measure uncertain whether the curse of the law be satisfied,

death be destroyed, Satan be vanquished, hell be disappointed; for our Surety, that undertook for us to deliver us from the hands of all these formidable adversaries, into subjection unto whom sin had brought us, has manifestly prevailed. Most unquestionably he satisfied the curse of the law, and thereby wrested their arms out of the hands of Death, Satan, and Hell: for instead of lying under the curse of the law, and therefore in the state of death within the dominions of him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, and reserved in that state unto the blackness of darkness for ever, which must have been his case had he not answered the demands which the law had against him as our substitute; I see him, in despite of death, the devil, and hell, going up into heaven. In defiance of death he lives, in defiance of the powers of the air he passed through, in defiance of hell he went up into heaven. Yea, when he ascended up on high, he proclaimed his victories over them all, and made them all a spectacle to angels and to men. Nor is this all. I understand,

*Thirdly.*—That *by ascending up on high he received gifts for men.* He not only went up to prepare a place for us, but also to open an intercourse between heaven and earth, by receiving gifts necessary to prepare us for heaven, and to bring us thither. These he went up to receive. His presence was necessary to his receiving them; *If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you.* He went up to receive the Spirit in his own person in all fulness for men, that he might give unto them. To receive gifts for men,



yea, for the rebellious, he ascended into heaven, that the Lord God might dwell among them. Sin had stopped the course of divine communications, the Spirit had been grieved and was withdrawn; the issue was, the world lay in wickedness, and darkness covered the earth. The Son of God will restore the fellowship. He becomes man, and takes away sin by the sacrifice of himself. He carries that manhood into heaven. In it he receives the fulness of the Spirit, the condition of receiving which he had fulfilled on the cross. Out of it he gives. And thus the communication is opened, the Lord God dwells among us again. This we owe to his ascension. He went up to receive; and he received to give. Had he not received and given, what had I been this day? My eyes had been still blinded by the god of this world. I had not known God; I had lived without him in the world. He gave prophets, apostles, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, and furnished them for their work. To these gifts I owe it that I am not still dead in trespasses and sins. He ascended up on high to receive the Spirit in his various gifts and graces for men, and to give thereof unto them. He has received, and he has given; yea, and he will give, for he will not forsake his people. If he ascended to receive gifts for men, he will not unfaithfully keep what he has received, but will send the Comforter to abide with his church for ever.

Upon the whole, therefore, when I say, He ascended into heaven, my meaning is, that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and Lord of all things, when

he had come down from heaven, been made man, suffered death on the cross, and risen from the dead, did by an actual removal go up to heaven in his whole person God and man; and by so doing, being the representative of believers, did prepare and take possession of a place for them there, both leading captive all their enemies, and also receiving for them the Holy Ghost to provide them with all needful gifts and graces, till he come and take them to himself.

But while I thus profess my belief of an exalted Redeemer, by no means could I think that I sincerely believed he was ascended for these purposes, unless I could find the influence of my belief upon my heart and in my life. And therefore, in conformity with these glorious ends of Christ's ascension, I declare,

*First.*—That it is my desire and endeavour to have my conversation in heaven, whither he is *gone to prepare a place* for his people. Thither in heart and mind would I ascend with him, and continually dwell, as a citizen of that blessed place. I would accustom myself to dwell upon the glory of heaven in my thoughts and meditations, till I found myself more in love with the same, waiting and desiring to be dissolved and to be with Christ. By faith I would acquaint myself with what the glorified saints have the full sight and enjoyment of, the glory of Jesus, and would behold as I could the glory which the Father hath given him. I would have my heart increasingly longing after and satisfied with the mansions of the city above, to which Jesus is gone, and where he

continually is; I would not be content with a cold, unanimated, dry acknowledgment of my Saviour's being ascended up to his glory; nor, like the world of unbelievers, talk of an ascended Jesus, and a heavenly kingdom, while my heart, and prospects, and pursuits, are fixed down to earth. Fond mistake! What! Ye sons and daughters of Pleasure, whose desires day and night are carried out after company and entertainment, according to that peculiarity which you relish and delight in, will you persuade yourselves that you believe Christ ascended into heaven to prepare a place for you? Can you really think you believe it, when that place has not the least desire of your hearts, when ye constantly forget it, and it does not prevail with you to take one step for the obtaining it? Will the worldling, who is thinking within himself, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? This will I do, I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits, and my goods: and I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many-years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry:—will this man imagine, or will his vain neighbour, that is labouring to build some Babel to get him a name, imagine with him, that they steadfastly believe Christ is ascended to take possession of a kingdom that cannot be moved in heaven for us poor mortal sinners? I would have my heart so fixed on the heavenly inheritance, as not only to be disengaged from the vain prospects of these children of the world, but that all things below should be in-

different to me. I would be in the temper of a man upon a desolate island, who was waiting for the vessel he saw at a distance, that was coming to convey him to a land of plenty and happiness, where he wishes to be.

*Secondly.*—Did Jesus ascend into heaven, leading captivity captive? Did he make it evident that his atonement had satisfied the curse of the law by his going up from all the power of Death, Satan, and Hell? Believing this, it is my duty, and shall be my endeavour, to rejoice over all these vanquished enemies. I would be saying to my accusing conscience, Knowest thou not that the demands of the law are satisfied? To Death, Where is thy dart? Shall I fear thee, whom Jesus has led vanquished in his ascent from thy dominions into heaven? To Satan I would say in all his assaults, Where is thy power? Have not I seen thee bound in chains? Rage if thou wilt, thou canst not hurt me. And to Hell I would say, Terrible as thou art in thy everlasting flames, thou canst not affright me. Thee also I have seen vanquished. I have nothing to fear from thee, if I prove faithful to my Lord. In the face of all these mine enemies I would stand resolved. Though I can bring my Redeemer little glory any other way, yet I would not dishonour him by unbelief, as if he had not led all these mine enemies captive when he ascended up on high. I would be strong in faith, that I might advance in love, and, disengaged from every slavish fear, might serve my Master cheerfully in all my conversation. Believing the triumphs of

my Redeemer, I would be steadfast against the fear of these potent enemies; yet, careful that my belief in the exalted Jesus wrought in me love and desire, I would guard against presumption. Believing that Jesus is ascended to heaven, in heart and mind I would ascend with him, and be raised above the gnawings of despair, and preserve myself safe from the greater danger of security. Does it become one, whose Surety is ascended into heaven, either to harbour earthly affections, or to fear vanquished enemies? The one and the other are a disgrace to the profession of a Christian. Grace enabling me, I will not stop in low attainments. I will steadfastly look up into heaven after Jesus ascended thither, till I can say, Lord, my heart is with thee; and then I will boldly say to Conscience, Death, Satan, and Hell, I fear you not.

*Lastly.*—Ascending up on high; did he receive gifts for men to bestow them on his people? And was the design of them that God might dwell among us, through the knowledge and love of the truth? Then, knowing what these gifts are, it is my desire and shall be my endeavour to use them answerably to the purpose of their vouchsafement. The Apostle has taught me to understand by these gifts a ministry furnished with the knowledge of the Gospel, able to teach, and disposed to do so: whoever is not thus prepared, is not provided by Christ for the ministry, does but invade the office by undertaking it, and can do nothing to the edification of the church. But such a qualified ministry is from the Lord. *He gave*

*gifts unto men. He gave some apostles; and some prophets; and some evangelists; and some pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.* Seeing therefore this ministry to be what my Lord has received and given, and seeing it is principally by means thereof that God dwells among us, through the knowledge and love of the truth hereby wrought in us, I think it my duty to reverence it as his gift, to attend upon it as his ordinance, and to endeavour that it may promote my edification. I will not turn my back upon it, as if I might profit as well or better without it; this were to think meanly of the gift of Christ. I will not attend upon it in curiosity, losing sight of the gift in the qualifications of the man, whatever they be. Neither will I lightly let slip what the Lord by this method teaches me, and thereby disgrace the ascension of Christ to receive and give gifts unto men. I will keep in memory that ministers in themselves are but earthen vessels, that I may not think highly of the men; yet I will remember, that, when they are duly qualified and disposed, they are Christ's gift, that I may not think meanly of their office. I will not glory in men, for all things are for the sake of the church; but will account them servants of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. My eye shall be upon them as the gift of Christ, and I will bear it in my remembrance that by their ministrations it is God who has ordained that I should be instructed and edified; for he has instituted no other. I will pray my ascended Lord that he will bless them

with all increase of knowledge and grace, and that he will bestow such gifts on all the churches of the saints. I know what glorious things were done, when soon after his ascension Christ vouchsafed his gifts to the Apostles and others. I know his hand is not shortened, and that the residue of the Spirit dwelleth in him; wherefore I will pray the Lord of the harvest that he will send forth labourers into his vineyard.

You see now the practical influence of Christ's ascension into heaven; the last circumstance of which very seasonably leads us to the solemn transaction of this Ember-week. We may judge of the regard we have for the gifts Christ received when he ascended up on high, by the importunity of our prayers that he will richly qualify and duly dispose those who are offering themselves to the work of the ministry. Should we not have this upon our hearts, could we really desire that God might dwell among us? Should we forbear to pray the Lord of the harvest, would there be any ground of persuasion that we believe either that Christ received such gifts or gives them unto men; or that we had the least concern for the edification of others, or even of ourselves? Faith is but a name, if it be not brought into practice. And if it be real, why should it not influence us in this respect, as well as any other? Those of you who are unacquainted with true faith will go away and forget, nor will Jesus hear any prayers from you on the present interesting occasion. Believers will hear, be reprov'd, and I trust quicken'd to pray that the Lord will even

now speak the word, that great may be the number of evangelical preachers.

The Collect for the Ascension-day will properly conclude this discourse.

“ Grant, we beseech thee, Almighty God, that  
 “ like as we do believe the only-begotten Son our  
 “ Lord Jesus Christ to have ascended into the hea-  
 “ vens, so we may also in heart and mind thither  
 “ ascend, and with him continually dwell, who liveth  
 “ and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, one  
 “ God, world without end. *Amen.*”



## S E R M O N XXIV.

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ACTS xvi. 30, 31.

*What must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.*

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HAVING considered and improved our Lord's ascension into heaven, we proceed to his session; *He sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty.*

The title *Almighty* is ascribed to the Father in the first article of the Creed as well as in the present. *Here* it intends the absolute *power* of God, whereby he doth all things, can do what he pleases, and is above all possibility of being hindered in the execution of his purposes. *There* it regarded his absolute *dominion* over all things as an universal and eternal Sovereign.

To be *on the right hand* of God the Father Almighty, or on the right hand of power (since God has not indeed hands), must regard the station unto which Christ is exalted, and express the singular honour and glory he is advanced unto as Mediator, the possession of universal dominion as Lord of all things in his me-

diatorial capacity, and his own most perfect and inconceivable blessedness.

And whereas he is said to *sit* on the right hand of the Father, this has no reference to his bodily posture, for the first martyr saw him *standing on the right hand of God*, but may imply his perpetual life and settled unalterable continuance in his exalted state, or more properly the authoritative administration of that power unto which he is exalted, and whereof he is put in possession.

In this exalted station our professor now considers him, who in the days of his flesh was the man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and having before declared his belief that Jesus had done all things while on earth, which either the glory of God or the salvation of sinners required of him in that state of humiliation, is now, in the merit of what he had done here below, possessed of all power in heaven, and employing it all in the most effectual manner to the same glorious ends. But particularly he intends to say,

*First.*—I believe Christ to be at the right hand of God in the present and perpetual administration of his *prophetical* office. While he was upon earth his word was with power, but the full power of that word was reserved to his being made head over all things to his church. Then the partition-wall being broken down which separated between Jews and Gentiles, he would *teach all nations*. This he has done and doth. He began with the Jews at the feast of Pente-

cost, and would teach them the way of life in believing that he was the Christ, the Son of God. I hear the poor fisherman open his mouth, and see the hearts of thousands bending before the testimony he gave, that Jesus, that very Jesus *whom they had crucified, was made of God Lord and Christ*. What! Was it the word or wisdom of Peter that wrought thus powerfully upon the hearts of so many hearers, bent with peculiar opposition against the truths which they received? Or was this an effect arising in a way of mere persuasion and evidence from the miracle of tongues which stared them in the face? Both words and works alike powerful they had repeatedly enjoyed under Christ's ministry without any such issue. What then was the cause? I see and own it. Jesus was now glorified; therefore the Holy Ghost was given. That gift he had now received of the Father, and now he began to shed abroad the same in a measure and manner never before known. He taught the hearts of his people by sending to them the light, not of his word only, but of his holy Spirit. In the strength of this influence the word ran. *Speedily the sound of it went out as it were into all lands, and believers were every where added to the Lord. The prince of this world was cast out of his dominion, which he usurped, and was forced to yield up the hearts of his captives to the more mighty Jesus. Thus the great Prophet of the church taught with power as soon as he was exalted to the right hand of God. Nor from that time to this day has he forgotten his office. In every age he has taught the hearts of his people.*

In this age he teaches all that ever come to know and love the truth. I see him doing it by multitudes. While his faithful messengers are declaring *the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven*, he is with them giving unto many hearts to understand them. He makes the word effectual, being present by the Spirit, though in person he be in heaven. Sleeping sinners awake, they arise from the dead, he gives them life. Yes, they live, they are turned from their former evil works, they live a divine life, they *shine as lights in the world*, he *leads them into all necessary truth*, he makes *their path as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day*. They have no need of an earthly infallible interpreter of the word of God, for he himself instructs them all therein, from the least even unto the greatest, in their use of his own institutions. I own him for my Prophet, I desire myself to *call no man on earth master*, and I would leave others to be taught by him also. I will read, hear, and meditate upon his word, which he has caused to be written for my instruction, and will pray and wait for his Spirit to guide me into all saving truth. I am told by the mouth of St. John, that the people of God *have received an unction from the Holy One*, who sits on the right hand of God, and dispenses his gifts and graces to the church; and I am further informed, that ‘This anointing abideth in them, and teacheth them of all things, so that they need not that any man teach them’ the first principles of Christianity, much less step into the place of the Spirit for their further information in revealed

truths. This unction I trust I have received; for surely from the heart I have been enabled to *confess that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh*; I confess him to be my Saviour, I confess him to be the Son of God, I confess him to have come in the flesh to die for the ungodly, I confess that herein is all my salvation. Having therefore this unction from him the Holy One abiding in me, I shall hereby both *know every spirit whether it be of God*, and in these evil days of man's wisdom most easily be assured that *he that denieth the Father as the Father, and the Son as the Son, is antichrist*, denying the Son to be the only-begotten of the Father, and having consequently no true knowledge of the Father, nor interest in him; and also keeping under its influence I shall be built up in my most holy faith, receiving constant additions of light and grace, and being furnished with higher qualifications for the kingdom of glory, through the continual care and teaching of my great Prophet, who sits at the right hand of the throne.

*Secondly.*—As I believe Christ to be on the right hand of God in the exercise of his prophetic, so also of his *priestly* office. In the merit of his atonement he is *gone up into heaven, and appears in the presence of God for us*. He presents his crucified body there in the behalf of his people. No sooner was he sat down on the right hand of God than he obtained their perfect reconciliation, and the gift of the Holy Ghost to bless them with. Wherefore, when I consider myself as I am, covered with innumerable transgressions, and altogether guilty before

God, I look up and see my crucified Lord presenting his sacrifice on the behalf of sinners before the throne; I cry out and say, *Who is he that condemneth?* *It is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.* When I am carried away by the force of temptation, and from the daily lamented corruption of my nature am surprised into sin, and my heart is vexed within me, and there is no rest in my bones by reason of my transgression, then I humbly get me to my Lord, look up to heaven, and say to my soul, *If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins.* When I would approach God, and my soul is ready to draw back from his presence in the thought of his great majesty and holiness, and of my unworthiness, as if it were presumption in me to look up unto this *holy Lord God*; and when I am sensible how low, unbecoming, and full of sin my very best addresses are; then I look to the right hand of the throne, and hear this encouraging account of my Lord's intercession recorded in the book of Revelations, and grow confident that God will not cast out my prayer; 'And another angel came, and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it up with the prayers of all saints, upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand.' When with

all my sins and infirmities about me, threatened by the law, and condemned by my own conscience, I nevertheless find in my soul a peace in believing, which also, especially under trials and afflictions, grows up to joy in the Holy Ghost; I remember the words of my Lord, 'If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but, if I depart, I will send him unto you;' and acknowledge his effectual advocacy, while I find that 'we have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but we have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.' While I find my heart inclined and stirred up to mourn over sin before God, to cry importunately for deliverance from the body of sin dwelling in me, to sue continuedly for mercy as for my life, and for grace to love God in my own soul, and to others that they may love him also; while I find my spirit thus in conformity with the word of God, I have a joyful testimony that Christ intercedeth at the right hand of God, yea, that even for me he maketh intercession. What I experience in myself is the fruit and proof of his interceding even for me. The Spirit thus given is the effect of his intercession, and the proof of my interest therein. In such case *The Spirit helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered.* And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

All these benefits I see arising unto me through the intercession of Christ, whose obedience unto death was so infinitely pleasing to the Father, that he had only to *will* all these things for his people and they are done; their persons are accepted, their daily miscarriages pardoned, their prayers heard, their souls comforted, their hearts quickened by the Holy Ghost to a penitent, humble, and heavenly temper. Well might the Apostle encourage us in these views of Christ's session at the right hand of God; 'Seeing then that we have a great High-Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not a High-Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.' I remark and treasure up the encouraging words, 'Obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.' Can I want more? Yet mercy and grace are the sure fruits of Christ's intercession to all that believe. For these I am encouraged to come boldly. Even so, Lord, I come to obtain this mercy, and find this needed grace, that I may hold fast my profession. In all my wants of either, it is my desire to look up to thee seated on the right hand of the Majesty on high in the character of Mediator, and therein of representative of thy people. I am indeed a guilty creature, and most unworthy in all I do; I am beset with enemies as well as sins; but thou livest for ever



making intercession for us, and through thy advocacy there is mercy to cover my sin, and grace to help my weakness. Blessed Lord, whatever way I turn my thoughts, ‘thou makest me to hear of joy and gladness.’ Thou art exemplifying to thy people what thou prayedst for them while thou wast on earth; and we are sure that of all which thou didst speak in thy prayer for us not one word shall fall to the ground, till thou hast fulfilled the desire of thy heart, which thou didst express in words from thy lips more precious to my soul than thousands of gold and silver: ‘Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me.’ But,

*Thirdly.*—I believe Jesus to be on the right hand of God as a *King* also. In this sense I principally understand his session at God’s right hand. There I acknowledge him as *Lord of all*. Such he was from eternity, by right of nature, as God; such he was by right of creation, inasmuch as *all things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made*; and such he was by office when he took up the mediatorial character; yet in that quality he was not invested with the administration of all power, but in consequence of his sacrifice; and therefore, though he shewed his dominion over men and things as occasion offered in the days of his flesh, yet he was not solemnly inaugurated and seated in his kingdom till his ascent into heaven, when, in consideration of his obedience unto death, ‘God gave him a name, which is above every name, that at the name

‘ of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.’ There I see him seated on his throne, not only in the power but in the exercise of universal dominion. *The Lord said unto my Lord*, said David in the word of prophetic faith, *sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool*. David’s Lord, and yet his Son. What the Scribes could not comprehend is my unspeakable joy. David’s Son, therefore man like myself: and David’s Lord, therefore the Son of God. To him God said, “ Sit thou at my right hand, “ until I make thine enemies thy footstool.” The grant is large as my wishes, for all his enemies are mine, and all my enemies are his. He reigns to restrain the rage of men, the fury of Satan, the malignity of corruption. Till the opposition of men, Satan, and sin, shall cease, he shall sit on his throne. But is this all? Has the exalted Jesus no subjects? Or does he forget these in the administration of his government? No; for he is *made head over all things to his church*, for their protection, safety, and happiness. He reigns to receive all that make their submission, to confer upon them the free and full reconciliation which he purchased with his blood. *On earth he had power to forgive sins*, and surely that power is not lessened since he is exalted to the right hand of the throne of God. He reigns to govern his people, not *with a rod of iron*, but with a gracious sceptre, which he has given them hearts to love, and

unto which he is continually bringing them into a more willing and entire subjection. He reigns to protect them against all their enemies, and to make all things work together for their good. Thus he reigns a terror to his enemies, but what a blessing to his friends ! and thus he shall reign till all things be put under him ; till upon the great day of his appearing devils and sinners shall be shut up in the eternal prison of hell ; till saints shall be made perfect in holiness, raised up immortal, incorruptible, and glorious ; and sin and Death, the last enemy, shall in regard of them be destroyed for ever. Then, ‘ When ‘ all things shall be put under him, he shall render ‘ up the *mediatorial* kingdom unto the Father,’ all the ends for which he received it being fully answered, and himself shall reign Godman for ever and ever, and his happy people with him.

All this I steadfastly believe concerning the kingdom in heaven of my exalted Lord, when I profess my faith in him as for ever sat down at the right hand of God. But then I would be understood to say this with an application of his kingdom to myself, owning him to be *my* Lord by submitting myself to his government, and leaning confidently on his protection against my every enemy, and all of them together.

*First.*—I do hereby declare that I willingly *submit* myself to his divine *government* and direction. And when I say this, my meaning is, that I desire without reserve to be conformed to his *words*, or written law, in spirit, soul, and body ; so that I may not be

of the number of those who *say unto him, Lord, Lord, but do not the things which he says*, disgracing his majesty by pretending to be his servants; that to the end of my being made conformable to his will I do desire to yield myself unto the guidance and discipline of his *Spirit*, in an entire dependence on his operations, in a regardful attention and submission to his sacred motions, and in a reverential acquiescence under all his dispensations to my soul; whether it be fit that I shall walk in darkness or in the light of God's countenance, as to his infinite wisdom, love, and goodness, shall seem fit: and, finally, that, for the purposes of his glory and of my sanctification, I do desire to be subject to the direction of his *providence*, to have the cross laid upon me in manner, measure, and continuance, as he pleases; humbly and heartily beseeching him, that, however heavy it may be, he will enable me to bear it, so that I may not be withdrawing from it when it presses hard and is heavy (which I am assured it will never be without some singular occasion), defeat the grandest designs of his glory by me, and the most signal means of advantaging my soul. Not thus disposed, could I say with a good conscience that I submit myself as a subject of his spiritual kingdom to his direction and will? Could I call him Lord in sincerity of heart? Could he get any glory by me, or I any benefit from his kingdom; or can I once think he will own me for one of his when he shall come in the clouds of heaven? But, blessed be God! even thus I desire to submit to his government, in a conformity with his

will, submission to his grace, and acquiescence in his providence. And,

*Secondly.*—I declare further, that, in yielding myself thus to his government, I desire confidently to *depend* upon the *protection* of the same. I would be always in the spirit of the Apostle, and say continually and in every case, ‘ I know whom I have believed, ‘ and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that ‘ which I have committed unto him against that ‘ day.’ I desire that I may never dishonour him in my heart or conduct by mistrusting his power, as if any thing were too hard for him; or his care, as though he should be forgetful of me. Confident in his royal authority to pardon, I would never yield to the accusations of an evil conscience while I was suing for his mercy. Confident in his sufficiency and love to strengthen my weakness, I would never stagger at the approach of a trial, or faint in the endurance of it, but boldly hold up my head in the assurance that ‘ he will not suffer me to be tempted ‘ above that I am able, but will with the temptation ‘ also make a way to escape, that I may be able to ‘ bear it.’ Confident in his power to sanctify me wholly, I would not sinfully doubt, though my lusts should be like lions roaring against and threatening to devour me; though they were never so old and obstinate; though the time for their mortification were never so short; though it were past all my comprehension how I could possibly be made perfect in holiness, while yet I was sensible that no unholy thing can enter heaven. Confident in his power to protect

me against the arts of the devil, I would never decline any duty from an apprehension that Satan will lie in wait to turn it into a snare to my soul; and should the fiend at any time beset me with horrible suggestions, and thrust into my mind black speeches well befitting his hellish mouth, I would neither fear nor tremble, but in the name of my Lord boldly resist him, yea, and in this respect scorn and despise him. Confident in his power to receive my departing spirit to himself, though I know not the world of spirits, though I have never tried the invisible state, I would joyfully surrender it up whenever it is his pleasure; and, confident in his power to raise my body from the dust, I would cheerfully at his call lay down this tabernacle: in the hour of death I would not distrust and disgrace my Lord's protection, but say to Death, "Welcome, thou last enemy! where, what is become of thy sting?" Finally, from this present moment till that hour come, I would not doubt or fear, though I should *dwell among scorpions*, though I should have to contend day by day with those *that are set on fire* by the rage and malice of their hearts, *whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword*; though my habitation were with such as 'every day wrested my words, all their thoughts being against me for evil, who should gather themselves together, and hide themselves, and mark my steps while they waited for my soul.' Though my trials from an evil world were without interruption, and of never so long continuance, so that I should grow up to gray hairs under them, yet still would I

be confident in my Master's care, nor so much as once say with David, *I shall perish one day by the hand of Saul.*

Thus confident, I would always be in the protection of my King who sitteth on the right hand of God. I would, but I too often do not. There is an evil heart of unbelief lurking within me. This I have great cause to fear will betray me. It must do so when I forget who sits on the right hand of God, and why he sits in that glorious station. When the heavens are opened unto my faith, and I see Jesus sitting on the right hand of God, then I can do all things. But, alas, how much too apt am I to lose that quickening, strengthening sight, in the cares and engagements of the world! then how ready to disgrace my Lord by sinful misgivings, and shameful compliances in the fear of present evil. Then every approaching trial staggers me, then I have no heart to hold out against corruptions, then the cunning and rage of Satan grow formidable, then death looks dreadful, then I tremble at the faces, the frowns, the reproaches of an evil world. This I know from experience, that, if I walk not by faith, I have power for nothing; and therefore, while I thus declare my honest desires, my cry is, *Lord, increase my faith!*

You see now somewhat of that which is contained in these words of our Creed, *He sitteth on the right hand of God, the Father Almighty.* You see I am persuaded that a real belief of his doing so implies a certain spirituality of temper, to which I could most earnestly wish none here present were strangers. But,

sirs, what correspondence have you in your souls with this exalted Prophet, Advocate, and King? I may be free to ask you such a question, because ye are come here under the name of his people. Yet I would much rather ye would ask yourselves what passes in your own hearts between you and him that sitteth on the right hand of God: whether any thing of what you have heard be a matter of your experience; whether in this manner ye believe he is alive in heaven; whether ye have any practical regard to him there as teaching, interceding for, governing, and protecting his church; whether your hearts go up to him with that frequency and fervency which may reasonably persuade you that you really believe in him as sat down at the right hand of God for these purposes. I say it would be very reasonable you should make such inquiry, whether this faith be in you or not? But since I fear many of you will not bestow on your souls so much as the pains of this inquiry, I will ask this very plain question, When did you last think where Christ was, whether in heaven or on earth? Have you thought of his being on the right hand of God this day, or yesterday, or the day before, or the week past, or the last Lord's day, or when? What say you in answer? Ah! I know what your heart is saying, "Truly I cannot tell when I thought about it, it is the least in my thoughts." And, if so, I need not add what your conscience is saying further, "That you have all to begin for your soul." Well, I wish then I could see you make a beginning. Will you now go home, and con-



sider what a case you are in, and set yourself to call on God for his grace to show you the full truth of your condition? No, I fear from what I have hitherto seen you will not. The devil will not suffer you. There will be company or business in the way. Satan will hinder you by some means or other. Ah, sirs, how do we trifle with our souls! were we to deal thus with our estates we should be deemed fools or madmen. Lord, awaken us out of our sleep, that we perish not!

## S E R M O N XXV.

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ACTS xvi. 30, 31.

*What must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.*

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WE left our professor comforting himself in the belief of his Saviour's sitting on the right hand of God; and are now to consider him as he rejoices in the expectation of Christ's coming the second time to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe that he who died for our sins is gone away into heaven to prepare a place for his people; from thence I am expecting him to come again with power and great glory to receive them unto himself, that they may be with him where he is: and in the mean time I see him sitting on the right hand of God to prepare them for the place which he has prepared for them; by teaching them from thence, and leading them into all truth as their exalted *Prophet*; by sending down upon them the comforting Spirit as their great *High-Priest* and *Intercessor*, in the power of which Spirit they come unto God with boldness by him, and ask every thing of him as their Father; and by both sanctifying their hearts by his grace through

the co-operation of his providence into a growing conformity with that holiness, the measure of which is revealed in the Scriptures; and also defending, protecting, and supporting them from and against their enemies; and causing every instance of opposition raised against them to work for their good, as their 'sovereign Lord and King.' Confident in his power, care, and love, to keep my soul against that day of his coming, I look forward to it with expectation, and express my faith and hope, saying, 'From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.'

What the *dead* are every one knows; even all that ever have died, or shall die, from the first to the last day. Yet, whenever the Lord comes, there will be a generation covering the face of the earth, as it is now. These are the *quick*, or living, here intended, who shall not die, but be changed; and, together with the dead, appear before the judgment-seat of Christ.

Nothing is more plainly declared in Scripture than that there shall be a judgment, before which all men shall appear; nor is the person who shall sit in the judgment-seat less explicitly assured to be Jesus Christ. But in what sort this coming of Christ to judgment stands here as an article of Christian faith, and what the person making profession of his Christian faith intends hereby, come now to be distinctly explained. His meaning is,

*First.*—I do hereby declare my steadfast belief, that Jesus Christ, who was once crucified, but now liveth at the right hand of God, and no other but he, shall

come to judge the quick and the dead. Taught by the Scriptures of God, I believe this. Without them I might indeed have supposed (God having kept up through the world such an opinion) that there would be a judgment hereafter, wherein all the disorder subsisting in this world, so evidently lying in wickedness, should be rectified; the mysterious ways of Providence cleared up and vindicated; the glory of God's government asserted and maintained; and every man be treated in a manner suited to his real character and conduct. But that this work, so manifestly above the reach of any creature, because only capable of being transacted by Omniscience and Omnipotence, should be effected by one in our nature, I could not in the least measure have suspected, unless the Scriptures of God had revealed it unto me. Yet now that God has made it known that he will *judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom he hath ordained, and hath given assurance thereof unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead*, I see hereby an honour put upon my once-despised Master wherein I greatly rejoice; perceive with unspeakable comfort that my judgment shall be according to the gracious terms of his Gospel; and am perfectly satisfied that he who loved me unto the death will deal with me in a corresponding tenderness, not disowning my poor services because they have been unworthy of him; and passing by my lamented imperfections and sins. Wherefore, being apprized from the very person of the Judge of the nature of the judgment, I do,

*Secondly.*—Make this my profession of his coming

to judge the quick and the dead with confidence therein. Was there not a Mediator between God and man, was I to be judged absolutely according to my works, nothing could be expected but condemnation and destruction ; for in that case no flesh living could be justified, *all having sinned, and come short of the glory of God*, and therefore must expect that he would glorify himself in the universal punishment of us all. But God in this *judgeth no man who believeth in Jesus, but hath committed all judgment to the Son*, and that for this reason, *because*, having assumed the mediatorial character, though he is God, yet *he is also the Son of man*. Knowing therefore the person of my Judge, I am assured of the measure of my judgment, that it shall be such as I have confidence I shall be able to answer. My sins will not be my destruction, because my Judge once died for the ungodly ; and in the sense of my ungodliness and misery I have, upon his invitation, betaken myself to him, who tells me now with his own mouth, *That he that cometh unto him he will in no wise cast out* ; and I have no suspicion that he will not make good at last what he now so graciously declares. I have nothing to fear from my manifold sins, being under this protection, and partaking of the benefits of this blood which cleanseth from all sins, provided I shall be able to make it appear that this my faith has been alive, and fruitful of good works. My works must appear to justify my faith : in the want of them I should be found to have no faith in me. But I have works to shew ; and these such as I know before-hand he will own, because he

has told me so already in his holy word. I have been made to understand, that *nothing availeth* now, or will be made any account of in the day of the Lord, *but faith which worketh by love*, by real love to him, and to his people for his sake. Now, with all my unbelief, pride, covetousness, shame, cowardice, and every accursed lust that wars in my members, I have certainly works of love to produce towards him and his people. When he shall ask me, “Hast thou loved me?” I shall be able to answer, “*Lord, thou knowest all things: thou knowest thou didst in my days upon earth reveal thyself to my sin-burdened soul, and cause me to behold thy glory as the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth, and thereby win my soul to thee, and work in me by thy power to make me love thee; thou knowest that I loved thee.* Yea, Lord, and thou knowest how thou didst overcome all my prejudices against thee, till I saw thee the *fairest among ten thousand, and altogether lovely.* I am ashamed to speak of any testimonies of my love (but they were thy work), defiled and defaced as it was in every instance by my abominable corruption and sinfulness; and therefore to thy praise I will make mention how thou didst possess me with a zeal for thy name, and enable me to confess it before men; in defiance of my own native cowardice to own myself in the midst of reproach to be thy servant; and to follow thy words, instead of the custom of the world, as the rule of my actions. Thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I loved *thee*, though,

“ alas! with an unequal love; and *thy interests*, but  
“ with too cold a heart. I did not yield myself, from  
“ the day that I knew thee, to the service of Sin and  
“ Satan, but professed myself to be, and in some im-  
“ perfect measure made that profession good through  
“ thy grace, thy servant, even thine only.—And since  
“ thou requirest yet a further and peculiar testimony  
“ of my having loved thee, by demanding of me the  
“ proofs of my having loved thy people, those that  
“ professed thy name, and followed thy steps, for  
“ thy sake; behold, Lord, didst thou not give me  
“ an heart to delight in these thy saints, here upon  
“ thy right hand, while they were upon earth? Thy  
“ love towards me constrained me to love them.  
“ Surely I could not forbear giving a cup of water to  
“ any of them, as bearing the name, and manifest-  
“ ing the character, of thy disciples. Thou hadst said  
“ to Peter, If thou *lovest me, feed my sheep*; and  
“ hast declared before, that what offices of love were  
“ done to any of thy brethren, as thou didst conde-  
“ scend to call them, thou wouldst regard them as  
“ done to thyself; yea, thou hast said, that *whoso-*  
“ *ever received one of thy children in thy name received*  
“ *thee*. Now, Lord, all these things didst thou en-  
“ able me to do, in some imperfect measure. I re-  
“ ceived and owned thy children for thy sake, while,  
“ because of their faithfulness to thee, the world was  
“ casting out their name as evil. Some little offices  
“ of love I tendered them. *I fed them, or gave them*  
“ *drink, or clothed them, or took them into my house,*  
“ *or visited them if they were sick or in prison*. Neither

“ was I utterly wanting to minister to their bodies in  
“ other respects, or to their souls, according to my  
“ gifts or abilities. It was upon my heart not to  
“ offend them, and I was not utterly without regard  
“ to my conduct, that it should not be unto them an  
“ occasion of falling. But, righteous Judge! I do  
“ not stand before thee in the merit of any of these  
“ things. I dare not in any such view speak of my  
“ love to thee or thy people. I see it unsuitable,  
“ low, worthless, nothing. Now it was plainly to  
“ have been all thy work, whatever of it there was,  
“ but to have been hindered, weakened, debased, by  
“ my exceeding selfishness; and I am astonished at  
“ thy miraculous power that any thing like love  
“ should ever have subsisted in my depraved heart,  
“ or appeared in my conduct. Lo, in the merit of  
“ thy blood and righteousness I stand here before  
“ thee. This is all my salvation this day. I will  
“ mention no other. But since thou wilt, and hast  
“ respect in mercy to my poor services, behold I  
“ render back all the glory of them to thee, who  
“ didst work them in me; and, as for myself, I will  
“ stand for ever before thee with this one acknow-  
“ ledgment upon my heart and tongue, Sinful and  
“ unprofitable I stand here saved by grace.”—Having  
therefore boldness to appeal thus to the Judge of all  
the earth, knowing that my Judge is my Saviour,  
under whose healing wings I have taken refuge from  
the avenging arm of Justice, knowing that my judg-  
ment will pass according to the works of faith, and  
not of the law, and having the testimony of my con-



science that Christ dwelleth in me by the spirit of love which he hath given me, I have boldness in the expectation of his coming, and do say, with confidence of my interest therein, The Lord is at hand to judge the quick and the dead.—Wherefore,

*Thirdly.*—Having this confidence in respect of judgment, I mean to express also my hope, expectation, and waiting desire of that day. I regard it as the day of my Lord's eminent triumph, when he shall come in the glory of the Father, with great power and unequalled majesty, attended by the hosts of heaven, and all nature bowing before him; when by the working of his mighty power the dead shall arise from the various distributions of their dust, and, with the assembled living, stand, a vast multitude which no man can number, before his seat, to own and honour, whether willingly or not, the once-despised Lamb; when the fallen angels too shall be brought up to adorn his appearance, and receive their final doom from his mouth; when he shall be admired in all them that believe, because of the adorable work he shall have wrought for them and in them, and upon such as would not obey his Gospel he shall get himself glory infinitely surpassing that when he destroyed so many of his haughty enemies in the depths of the Red Sea; when every eye shall see him, and they that pierced him shall own that he is no other than the once-crucified Jesus; when by his royal word he shall pronounce the sentences never to be recalled; by his omnipotency shut up the damned in the caverns of hell for a miserable eternity; and bid a

new heaven and earth to come forth furnished and provided with every circumstance of greatness, glory, and beauty, to receive for ever his happy saints. Can I think of this day, so honourable to him whom my soul loveth, without longing and wishing for its appearance? And when I consider that his people shall partake with him in the glories of that day; hearing his voice, shall come forth victorious over Death, the last enemy, decked in all the brightness, strength, and glory of a spiritual body; with their own eyes behold their Lord avenging himself upon his enemies and theirs by an utter destruction; and hear him say to them those ravishing words never to be recalled, *Come, ye blessed of my Father!* can I do other than say, *Come, Lord Jesus! come quickly?* Surely I would rejoice to see and be for ever with the Lord; to behold all his beauty as the express image of the Father's person; to contemplate with endless and insatiable transport the glory which the Father has given him; to make my acknowledgment in the praises of heaven among the multitude which no man can number, as saved, for ever saved, by his love and care, his power and grace. What! when the least beam of his glory now let in upon my soul turns my earth into heaven, and makes me cry out with Peter, 'It is good for us to be here,' can I wish him to delay his coming? When, remaining in this vale of misery, I groan under corruption, and am burdened with a corruptible body, can I say, This is better than to be fashioned in soul and body like unto the Lord? When I find here nothing but vanity and vexation of spirit, shall I be

averse to the Lord's coming to change my sorrows into joy unspeakable and full of glory? Here, beset as I am with enemies, would I not long for that blessed day when I shall see them again no more for ever? And would I not be glad to be taken from a world lying in wickedness into the new heavens and earth wherein dwelleth righteousness? I know that my Redeemer liveth, I know that he shall stand on the latter day on the earth; I have humble confidence that he will own me among the children; and shall I, like those who know no better joys than this world can afford them, are ignorant of a Redeemer's righteousness, and lie under the conscious guilt of unnumbered and unpardoned sins; shall I, like them, cleave to this base life as my all for happiness, and not wait, and wish, and long for the day of my Master's glorious appearance? No, I will not abide in that low measure of faith, which only begets a hope that it may be well when the Lord comes, but knows not what it is *to love the day of his appearance*. My endeavour shall be to be *strong in faith, and abounding in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost; always fruitful in good works, and hastening unto the day of the Lord*. Hold out, Faith! and come, Lord Jesus! Yet,

*Fourthly*.—When I declare my belief, confidence, and hope, concerning the coming of Christ, I do therewith also express my purpose and determination to be daily making preparation for his coming. All my belief, confidence, and hope, regarding that day, I must needs look upon as delusion, unless the ex-

pectation thereof makes me both diligent and persevering in the work of the Lord. For assuredly I could neither believe, nor desire, nor have any interest in the day of the Lord, if the coming of that day did not in such manner abide upon my heart as to engage me unto a continual preparation for it. But I know that the day of the Lord cometh, yea, that it cometh as a thief in the night, and therefore it is my desire to be always prepared, that whenever it cometh I may be found so doing as that my work may be ready. Like the foolish virgins, I would not go out to meet the bridegroom not having oil in my lamp, neither with those that were wise would I slumber and sleep, suffer my lamp to burn dimly, and to need trimming when the cry of the bridegroom's coming should reach me. It is my desire and purpose to live always as if I heard that solemn voice sounding continually in my ears, *Awake, ye dead, and come to judgment*; and, in this view, not barely to abstain from such things as would bring me to confusion of face before the judgment-seat of Christ, but as much as possible even from all such thoughts, cares, and studies, as would make me forgetful of the day of the Lord. On the contrary, I would be daily laying up treasures for that day. Every day would I be so meditating upon and have fixed on my heart the day of judgment, that my faith therein should be more lively, and my hope of it more ardent, and this my faith and hope kindle my love of Jesus and of his people into a brighter flame, to the consuming more and more all selfish, sensual, and earthly ends and

mixtures; and to the producing such works of love, to him and them, as will be to the increase of praise and glory on that day. I would not have one day or hour go by, wherein the coming of the Lord should be forgotten; nor one thing brought forth that would not graciously be remembered when I shall stand before the judgment-seat of Christ. Every day and hour I would be doing something for judgment, whether by endeavouring after an inward increase of that faith which worketh by love, or by attempting something outwardly for the honour and interests of my Master, for the salvation and present happiness of others, for his sake. Wherever I had been, and whatever I had done, I would be able, on reflection, to trace the footsteps of this expectation to have been in my conduct; and, as I grew nearer to that day, I would have this expectation to become more strong, fruitful, and visible, in my every action. I would not grow weary nor faint, but endure unto the end in such works as are prepared for me to walk in, hastening still onward to the day of the Lord. To this work I would encourage myself by repeated meditations on the glory of that illustrious day; and perpetually would I ask myself, Am I ready? Will this and this, O my soul! retard or promote thy readiness? Will this or this bring thee joy or shame at Christ's coming? Thus would I exercise myself in the belief and expectation of the day of the Lord; thus would I do, and be found doing when my summons is brought me by Death to appear before the Judge of quick and dead; and in the confidence of my Redeemer's merit, and of my interest

therein, I would say to death, *Welcome*; and to the day of Christ, *Come quickly*.

What has been now set before you is the plain unquestionable meaning of the point under consideration. What shall we think, therefore, if, while we own with our mouths that Christ shall come from the right hand of God to judge the quick and the dead, we have neither confidence in nor hope of that day, and have not made nor are making any preparation for that? In such case, shall we say, or can we think, we have faith in this article? And O how much less may this be said, if we know in our consciences that we are absolutely unprepared for that awful day, and so, instead of having any confidence therein, are satisfied it would be our destruction, should it find us as we are, and therefore tremble at the thought of its coming? Alas, alas, my dear friends! how shall many of us appear before the judgment-seat of Christ? for what have we to appear in? Where is our faith in Jesus Christ? What fellowship is there between him and our souls? Where are the works of faith, love to him and to his people? Have we none of these to show? No owning of Christ, no following his words, no renouncing the ways of men for his sake, no love of his people, no giving so much as a cup of water to any because they are his? What! in no kind, in no degree, such works as he will own? And yet shall we receive according to our works? But what can we think of it then, if instead of owning Christ we have been opposing him; instead of loving his people we have been hating them

for being so; instead of having any good works to show for ourselves, Christ will find an endless number of evil works to show against us? What can we think of it, if nothing shall appear to have been done by us but what is evil continually; ceaseless, numberless works of darkness, in thought, word, or deed, as many as the days, hours, and minutes of our lives have been? What! my dear friends, will any one of us be hardy enough to appear under these circumstances before Christ's judgment-seat, where nothing can be hid, and all will be laid open? Yet remember there we must all come, whether we will or no. God will have it so, and who can prevent it? To be plain, I am grieved at heart for many, very many of you, to think how you will make your appearance before Christ's judgment-seat. You have no works to speak there for your belonging to Christ; I can see none. I see works of various kinds that prove you do not belong to him. If a life of pleasure, idleness, company-keeping, indulgence, drunkenness, pride, covetousness, would recommend you to the favour of the Judge, few would be better received than numbers of you. In the name of God, my friends, when you know, this moment, in your own consciences, that if, as you have been and are, you should be called to judgment, you would be as surely cast into hell as if you were already scorching in those dreadful flames, why will you live at such a rate? Well, we shall be all before the judgment-seat of Christ together. There the controversy between me, persuading you by the terrors of the Lord, and you, determined to abide in your

sins, will be decided. There it will appear whether your blood will be upon your own heads for your obstinate impenitency, or upon mine for not giving you warning. Christ will certainly either acquit or condemn me on this account; and if I should be acquitted herein, what will become of you? I tremble to think how so many words of mine will be brought up against you on that day. What will you say? what will you answer? how will you excuse yourselves? O, sirs, if you will not be prevailed upon, you will with eternal self-reproach curse the day that you knew me, or heard one word from my mouth! Why, why, why will you die with so aggravated a destruction? O think of the judgment; think of it, and you will not be able to hold it out against your own souls! May the Lord incline you to do so; may he cause this word to sink deep into your hearts; may he shew you all your danger; and with an outstretched arm bring you out of the hands of the devil, and translate you into the glorious kingdom of his dear Son, to his own glory, and your unspeakable happiness in the day of the appearance of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ! Even so, most mighty God, and most merciful Father, for the same Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.



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